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DANCE PERSPECTIVES

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Winter 1961

Frederick Ashton and his Ballets

by Clive Barnes

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DANCE PERSPECTIVES

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C. B.

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IN PERSPECTIVE

In the midst of a virtual plethora of books about ballet dancers, books about how to be a ballet dancer, and books about stories of ballets, we look almost in vain on the current scene for books—or even short sketches—about ballet choreographers. There are valid reasons for a writer's hesitating to tackle the important job of analyzing the works of ballet's creative artists. How accurate is his memory, not only of those fleeting actions on the stage but also of his own fleeting impressions of them? How can he assess a creator of his own time, one whose work is still unfinished? And how can he judge achievement in an art where hardly any aesthetic principles have been established, even to be disagreed with? The task is fraught with difficulties.

Yet the editors of *Dance Perspectives* do not quail at difficulties when the challenge is worth meeting and we have the right man to meet it.

In bringing together Frederick Ashton as the choreographer to be discussed and Clive Barnes as the writer to discuss him, we have no qualms. The works of Mr. Ashton, skilled and sensitive, stand among the foremost of our era. They have been waiting only for a mind equally skilled and sensitive to lead the way to a fuller understanding of their riches.

In Clive Barnes, we believe, we have found an ideal interpreter of the Ashton ballets. Born in London in 1927, Mr. Barnes is a graduate of Oxford, where he was co-editor (with John Percival) of the University Ballet Club's magazine *Arabesque*. Since 1951, he has been associate editor of *Dance and Dancers*. Ballet critic of *The Spectator* and London correspondent for *Dance Magazine*, he also writes on music, ballet, and drama for the *Daily Express*. He published *Ballet in Britain since the War* in 1953.

Mr. Barnes writes: "By day I work in the Town Planning Department of the London County Council. My hobbies are ballet, music, theatre, town planning, reading and ballet. I like left-of-centre politics, parties and films."

On the cover: Moira Shearer, Michael Somes, and Margot Fonteyn in *Symphonic Variations*

On the title page: Margot Fonteyn in *Ondine* (The Rank Organization)

The drawings of Frederick Ashton are by Pavel Tchelitchev.

The photographs on pages 11, 15, 19 and 24 are from the collection of Marie Rambert.

THE CLASSICAL MASTERS

Looking back into recent times and trying to assess the course of ballet in the last fifty or sixty years, you immediately bump up against the figure of Michel Fokine. It was Fokine who, both by the precept of his Five Principles and the practice of his ballets, re-established the validity of Jean Georges Noverre's conception of dance-drama. Yet this, important as it was, now seems hardly more significant than the new conception of the choreographer which was brought into being by the Fokine/Diaghilev tradition. Previously the tendency had been towards ballet-masters, who, however gifted, were men of somewhat less influence and importance in the scheme of dance than their post-Fokine successors in the West.

The emergence of Fokine as the prime creator of ballets, a figure more important than the dancer, the designer, or even the composer, led to a quite new conception of choreography in ballet. Since Fokine the "choreographer's ballet" (strictly analogous to the Director's cinema) has been the normal order of the day, and during this century choreographers have had a power and influence such as they never wielded during the nineteenth century. After Serge Diaghilev they have also tended to become the co-ordinator (or, if you prefer it, the "artistic

director") of the complete production. Some of these choreographers, notably Leonide Massine and Antony Tudor, have been expressionist artists in the Fokine tradition, but the two major figures of the post-Fokine ballet are probably the neo-classicists George Balanchine and Frederick Ashton.

Balanchine and Ashton are counter-revolutionaries, taking as their task the re-affirmation of classical ballet. They look back beyond Fokine and Massine, finding their inspiration in Marius Petipa and the classical classroom. The first man to quip sardonically "Petipa the father, Balanchine the son, and Ashton the Holy Ghost" was unknowingly expressing a valuable half-truth about contemporary ballet. However, although both have gone back to recover elements from the pre-Diaghilev ballet, they are also essentially modern artists (particularly Balanchine who has never lost that experimentalism which marked his work with Diaghilev), and while they have both claimed Petipa as their ultimate master, the influence of the Diaghilev group on their work has been hardly less significant.

The similarities between these two master choreographers are obvious. They are of the same generation (Balanchine was born in 1904 and Ashton two years later); one has been the dominating influence on American, the other on British ballet; both have shown (and in this they are unique among choreographers) ever-increasing power over their medium; both have been attacked as soulless purveyors of classroom exercises; both are a great deal more popular in New York than London (this has naturally affected Ashton much more than the New York-based Balanchine); both place a great deal of emphasis on craftsmanship; while as men, both are jealous of their own reputations and tend to be resentful of criticism (although perhaps not too much weight should be placed on a quality they share with so many other artists), and both give the same personal impression of slightly uneasy confidence in themselves. The great qualities they share are their love for classical ballet and the musical awareness they bring to the art of choreography. For these basic reasons, despite their many differences, I would be wary of any man who affected an admiration for the one which did not extend to the other. To my mind they stand together as the great classical masters of the twentieth century.

Angus McBean

THE MAN

Frederick Ashton looks neither like a dancer nor a choreographer. In fact the chance acquaintance would have difficulty in nailing him to any profession. His looks are nearly as elusive as his personality. His features, dominated by a high brow and long nose, are now tending towards heaviness, yet they still retain the unusual, Patrician distinction once drawn by Pavel Tchelitchev. He assumes an air of world-weariness, but his eyes are wary, thoughtful and mischievous. He is utterly unassuming and in a crowd I suspect he would be easily overlooked, yet once noticed his whole manner has something oddly compelling about it. A shrewd intelligence glints through his timidity, his sophistication (perhaps more apparent than deep)

is mixed up with innate kindliness, and for all his shyness he responds unaffectedly to warmth and admiration. He wants to be loved to a degree rare in a great man. He is—almost all at once—reticent and warm, indiscreet and bitingly witty. He is both volatile and phlegmatic. He has great charm, perfect manners and is—in the nicest English way—something of a snob. Having had greatness thrust upon him by his own abilities, he now endearingly wears that greatness like someone else's topcoat, as if he were a little uncertain about the fit, and is still nervous lest its owner should come to claim it. Now (at least to a casual observer) he is beginning to realise that the coat really is his, and to snuggle down into it. But perhaps he will always have doubts. And perhaps without those doubts he would be much less of an artist.

Ashton was born on September 17, 1906, in Guayaquil, Ecuador. His father was an English businessman living in South America, and Ashton was the youngest boy of the family. He had four elder brothers, a sister and a step-brother. A year and a half after his birth, the family moved to Lima, Peru, where he lived until he was nearly fifteen. Here Ashton was brought up in a Catholic school of the Dominican Fathers, and sometimes even served as an acolyte at High Mass. His blonde hair made him stand out like a cherub from the jet-black heads of his fellow-schoolchildren, and he grew to love the Catholic rituals with their sense of form, order, and ceremonial. (In an article by Beryl de Zoete appearing in *Horizon* for July 1942, Ashton is quoted as saying: "I liked doing these ceremonies, and I learned to time things rightly and to make effects at leisure, and a proper time for climaxes and the whole artful measure of things and the ecstasy of rituals.") He was born and bred in the sun, and even now he longs for a warm climate. The rituals and the sunshine of Peru have left a lasting impression on Ashton; given him a certain foreignness that lies just beneath his true-blue British exterior. He was happy at home, although somewhat spoilt as the youngest son, and found few points of contact with either his father or his elder brothers.

It was in Peru that he went to the theatre for the first time. He saw *The Barber of Seville* at the local opera house, and although he did not see the opera again until 1960, he found he

could still recall scenes and incidents from it. Yet it was his second visit to the theatre that left the lasting mark on Ashton's life. In 1917 Anna Pavlova and her company appeared in Lima, and the eleven-year-old Ashton was taken to see her. He went along in a party; it was the first time he had ever travelled in a motor-car. As one dancer after another came on, he thought each one must be Pavlova, and when the ballerina herself did eventually appear he was at first disappointed. Then as she danced he recognized her, and recognized what he wanted, possibly even needed, to do.

Ashton has told me: "I loathed and detested school. It changed me from an extrovert into an introvert. I detested everything except English literature and I detested organized games most of all." Ashton's place in the sun was disturbed when after the war he was sent "home" to England for his schooling. Like most middle-class English boys he went to a "public school," in his case Dover College. When he arrived he even spoke English with a Spanish accent. On his first day the master said: "Open your algebra books," but Ashton scarcely knew what algebra was. (He claims he never really found out, even though he did discover something about Euclidean geometry, when he enlisted its aid in creating *Scènes de Ballet*.) The main lessons he learnt at school were how to cheat and how to improvise. He was never very good at the organized games which are always compulsory in the English school system. He had to play cricket regularly, and in three years succeeded in scoring the remarkable total of six runs! Given his background and personality, his inevitable backwardness at lessons, together with his awkwardness at games, and his unpopularity was a foregone conclusion. No society anywhere in the world is crueller or more uncompromising than the boys of an English public school. So Ashton found himself virtually ostracized, although he made two or three friends who formed themselves into an informal clique against the rest. It was with them that he evolved a private form of scoring for use in any ball games, whereby they *lost* a point every time they touched the ball! His parents had hoped that Ashton would proceed from Dover College to Cambridge and thence to a career in the Government Diplomatic Service, but he was never able to catch up on the lost lessons of his

youth. Luckily for British ballet he could not pass the examinations that would have taken him to the University, so in 1924 he went to work for a firm of iron and steel export merchants in the City of London. He was a "foreign correspondent," being paid 30s a week.

Soon after he started work he saw an advertisement in a newspaper—Leonide Massine would give a free, trial lesson to male dancers. He wrote to Massine, asking him what to wear, and Massine replied "pajamas and slippers." With some trepidation Ashton went along to Massine's studio in Dyott Street, where the great man gave him his first lesson, and, according to Ashton, made the pronouncement: "You 'ave a distinctive talent—come ev'ry Saturday, the charge will be one guinea." So every week on Saturday afternoons Ashton went to class. Soon he was asking Massine when they were "going to stop these exercises and start dancing," but he persevered. Also working in the class were Rupert Doone and a young boy called Walter Gore.

All this time Ashton was at his City office between nine o'clock in the morning and six in the evening. The great day came when, right at the threshold of his business career, he had to arrange his first contract. He arranged it, and promptly lost the firm £1,000. He resigned his job, went home and took to his bed, pretending to be ill. The sympathetic doctor, who was called in to advise on the malingerer, correctly diagnosed the trouble and recommended that he be allowed to take up dancing classes full time. One of Ashton's elder brothers offered to pay for the lessons on condition that Ashton "never go into a chorus." He never has.

When Massine left England, he sent Ashton, together with one or two other of his more promising pupils, to Marie Rambert. It was in this way that Ashton became associated with what is usually regarded as the first English ballet.

At that time Nigel Playfair was presenting a revue at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, to be called *Riverside Nights*. He contacted Marie Rambert, and it was arranged that the revue should include a short ballet performed by dancers from her school. Rambert's husband, the playwright Ashley Dukes, devised a scenario based on the Madame de Sevigné story of

RIGHT: Frederick Ashton in the costume of M. Duchic in *A Tragedy of Fashion* (Maurice Beck and Macgregor)

BELOW: The Marie Rambert Dancers: Andrée Howard, Diana Gould, Frederick Ashton, Rambert, Robert Stuart, William Chappell, Prudence Hyman, Pearl Argyle (British-Continental Press, Ltd.)

Louis XIV's cook, who committed suicide when the fish was not delivered in time for a royal banquet. Dukes transposed the story to contemporary times and changed the cook into a fashionable couturier, who killed himself with his scissors when one of his creations failed.

Rambert's original idea had been to ask her student, Frances James, to produce the choreography, but Ashton was so full of ideas about the possibilities of the ballet that eventually she told him he had better do it himself. Ashton instantly thought of inviting Francis Poulenc to write the music and Chanel to design the costumes. However, Rambert persuaded him (if persuaded is quite the word) that Eugene Goossens' *Kaleidoscope* would do equally well, and it was arranged that Sophie Fedorovitch should do the designs. This was the first collaboration between Fedorovitch (whose contribution was hidden on the program under the initials of F. E. D.) and Ashton. The date was June 15, 1926, and the ballet was called *A Tragedy of Fashion, or The Scarlet Scissors.* Horace Horsenell, writing in *The Observer,* referred to this as "an engaging little ballet," but another, sterner-minded critic wrote: "It is a somewhat disappointing production in which the choreographer seems to have attempted to model his work upon that of Massine." Afterwards Fedorovitch always used to say that it was Ashton who had given her her first chance as a designer—but if he helped her, then it was soon her turn to help him. Ashton's father had died, and money was short. It seemed as though Ashton would have to give up ballet classes, until Fedorovitch came forward with the offer to pay for them, and also to let Ashton have a pound a week pocket money. (Madame Rambert says that it was for special classes in Dalcroze eurhythmics that Fedorovitch paid, but the principle was the same.)

Soon after this first excursion into choreography, Ashton had an audition for Pavlova, but was rejected. At that time he had not met the great ballerina, yet had already been introduced to Diaghilev, and it was with him that Ashton made his next move to enter Russian ballet. Eugene Goossens had made arrangements for him to give an audition with the Diaghilev company, and when the time came the young dancer presented himself at the stage door. But he did not have the nerve to enter.

In 1927 Ashton made his second attempt at choreography by arranging dances for *The Fairy Queen,* produced by the Purcell Opera Society. In the same year he heard of the Ida Rubinstein company being formed in Paris, and he went there to have an audition with Bronislava Nijinska. When he was accepted he was the only British dancer in the company, (typically he describes it as being the only "non-foreigner"), although later he was joined by William Chappell and Rupert Doone, the latter then being already an established performer. Massine was perhaps the first influence on Ashton, both as a dancer and as a choreographer (and it is remarkable how many of his first press notices mention a "Massine-influence"), but it is Nijinska who made the greatest impression on the young Ashton. He danced in almost all of the ballets produced by the Rubinstein company, including Nijinska's *Le Baiser de la Fée, La Valse* and *Bolero,* as well as in three ballets by Massine. For the most part he was in the corps de ballet (being paid £8 a month, which was later raised to £12 a month), yet his technique was steadily improving, and it is of interest that in *Les Noces de l'Amour et Psyche* he danced in a pas de quatre with such distinguished company as Yurek Shabelevsky, David Lichine and Roman Jasinsky.

After a year of the Rubinstein company, Ashton returned to England and Rambert. Soon he was to be recognized, together with Ninette de Valois, as being one of the two most promising choreographers in the country. At this time he still wanted to be primarily a dancer, and choreography was a secondary interest—"someone had to do it." Rambert always had faith in his choreographic abilities, and in 1945 (writing in *The Dancing Times*) Ashton paid tribute to her leadership: "Hers is a deeply etched character, a potent bitter-sweet mixture, she can sting the lazy into activity, make the rigid mobile and energise the most lethargic . . . she has the unique gift of awakening creative ability in artists. Not only myself, but Andrée Howard, Antony Tudor, Walter Gore and Frank Staff felt our impulse for choreography strengthen and become irresistible under her wise and patient guidance."

Rambert still adores Ashton—looking at old photographs of him she will suddenly say: "See, my Fred—how good-looking

he was!" She talks about him as a dancer: "People forget what a very good dancer he was, his wonderful style and ease of movement." Then she will show a film of the young Ashton bounding through *Foyer de Danse.* "He was always the most inventive of choreographers. He had glorious ease and perfect taste, but—do you know—I don't think he ever really fulfilled himself until right now with *La Fille Mal Gardée.* This is the real Fred, and he has made the first great English classic." She remembers his birth as a choreographer. "It had been decided that he was to do *Tragedy of Fashion.* We played through lots of music together—then I struck upon this piece of Goossens. Fred said it was undanceable. I said nonsense, and to prove it I sketched out the simplest enchaînement—I forget what it was—I was never a choreographer. Fred jumped up, and said, 'No, no, it should go like this.' He corrected me and showed me what he wanted to the 'undanceable' music. He had started choreographing."

The ballets Ashton produced for Rambert's Ballet Club not only laid the choreographic foundation for that historic organization, but also for British ballet itself. In 1929 one of his ballets, *Capriol Suite,* was seen at a "Sunshine" Matinee; Ashton heard that it had interested Pavlova, and he was emboldened to write to the great ballerina. Her husband, Victor Dandré, replied inviting him to tea at Ivy House. Ashton was admitted and waited anxiously, chatting to Dandré. Pavlova swept in to the sitting room in a grand entrance, saw Ashton sitting there, looked at him and murmured: "Ah, so young . . ." Ashton asked her to come and see his work; at first she said she couldn't find time immediately, but eventually he persuaded her to go to the Rambert Studios the next Saturday. She was giving a season at the Golders Green Hippodrome, immediately before leaving for Holland at the beginning of a Continental tour, and before she left, Dandré—who was also her manager—gave him a contract to produce ballets for her company. In Holland, Pavlova died, and the contract remained with Ashton as a last souvenir of the dancer who first inspired him many years previously in Peru.

Now began a period of great activity for the young choreographer. The Camargo Society (a producing organization of the greatest importance to the beginnings of British ballet) had

ABOVE: Diana Gould with Frederick Ashton and William Chappell in *Capriol Suite*

RIGHT: Frederick Ashton in the costume of *Capriol Suite* (Barbara Ker-Seymer)

been formed, and here Ashton first met Ninette de Valois, and first danced in one of her ballets, *Rout*. The Ballet Club continued as ever, but Ashton's activities were widening. He arranged a small ballet for Anthony Asquith's film *Dance Pretty Lady,* and produced choreography and danced in cabaret at the Trocadero. Lady Asquith brought C. B. Cochran to the Ballet Club, and Cochran, impressed with the young man, gave him work in quite a number of his revues.

Ashton's first brush with the Vic-Wells Ballet (later Sadler's Wells, later still Royal Ballet—the names will have to be regarded here as synonomous) came in 1931, when he produced a work called *Regatta. The Daily Telegraph* described Ashton's choreography as "amusing," while to *The Observer* the ballet was "a delightful frolic in the modern manner." The "modern manner" must have fairly soon become old-fashioned, as it did not remain long in the repertory. Later the Vic-Wells revived two ballets, *The Lord of Burleigh* and *Pomona,* which Ashton had first produced for the Camargo Society, and finally, towards the end of 1933, Ashton had his first opportunity of creating a major ballet for the Vic-Wells company. This was *Les Rendezvous.* Writing about it before its production in the *Old Vic & Sadler's Wells Magazine,* Ashton said: "It has no serious portent at all, it is simply a vehicle for the exquisite dancing of Idzikowski and Markova." The ballet was a very considerable success. *The Daily Telegraph* acclaimed it: "One could ask for nothing lighter or more delicious than the new *divertissement.* . . . Frederick Ashton has found inspiration for choreography which is instinct with speed and grace and gaiety. The ballet fully deserved the ovation it received." *Les Rendezvous* proved to be Ashton's first contribution to the permanent repertory of the British national ballet, although his earlier *Façade* and *Capriol Suite,* both produced by the Camargo Society, were later absorbed by the national company.

At the beginning of 1934, Ashton was invited to go to New York to direct the Virgil Thomson/Gertrude Stein opera *Four Saints in Three Acts.* He travelled to America steerage, and was not paid for the assignment. In New York he stayed with friends and was given a dollar a day pocket money. Perhaps it was not the most triumphant way of becoming an "international

choreographer," but this first trans-Atlantic expedition did a great deal for Ashton. It was his first success outside the then tiny parish of British ballet, and it added to his confidence in himself as a choreographer.

On his return from America, Ashton went back to Marie Rambert's Ballet Club and produced *Mephisto Valse* for Alicia Markova, and early the next year created *Valentine's Eve*. Soon after, he revived another of his Camargo Society ballets, this time *Rio Grande*, for the Vic-Wells, a production now best remembered for the chance it gave to the young Margot Fonteyn, who had her first leading role in an Ashton ballet.

It was at the end of this 1934/35 Vic-Wells ballet season that the die was cast for the future of the Royal Ballet, the future of Fonteyn, and the future of Ashton himself. Markova decided to leave the company, and for the next season it became a vital necessity to find her successor as ballerina. Nevertheless, Ninette de Valois, still looking towards the future, decided to offer Ashton a permanent contract, and at the beginning of the 1935/36 season, he was installed both as choreographer and dancer. It was also at this time that de Valois made what some

Four Saints in Three Acts

people regard as the one serious miscalculation in her direction of the Royal Ballet's early days. Antony Tudor had been a member of the company for some time, always hoping to get the chance to choreograph. De Valois feeling, no doubt rightly, that she could offer opportunities to only two choreographers, chose Ashton and herself. Tudor left the organization, a disappointed man. Had de Valois had the courage and foresight to resign her own choreographic ambitions, concentrating exclusively on directing the company, she might have made use of both Ashton and Tudor, with possibly far-reaching results. However, to suggest, as some commentators have done, that her choice rested *between* Ashton and Tudor is merely to beg the question. Undoubtedly Ashton's talents and versatility made him an inevitable choice for chief choreographer, and this has been amply justified by time. The only real question seems now to have been who was to assist Ashton in the building up of the native repertory.

With Ashton in the British national ballet his career assumed a fairly regular pattern. His first entirely new work for the company after his appointment was *Le Baiser de la Fée,* which also gave Fonteyn her first significant, created role. Then from 1935 until the outbreak of war, ballet followed ballet in one of the most productive periods of the company's history: *Apparitions, Nocturne, A Wedding Bouquet, Horoscope,* the slighter *Judgment of Paris, Harlequin in the Street,* and his early flop, *Cupid and Psyche.* By this time Ashton's fame was spreading abroad, and in 1939 he was invited by Massine to produce a new work for the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. Destined primarily for Alexandra Danilova, it was called *Devil's Holiday,* and Ashton rehearsed it in Paris during the summer before the war. The war came, and the ballet was never seen in Europe, having its first performance later that year in New York. Ashton was not even able to supervise the final rehearsals, and it remains the only one of his ballets he has never seen on the stage. Earlier the same year Ashton had been offered a permanent contract by Richard Pleasant to join the proposed Ballet Theatre, which was to make its bow early in 1940. Ashton had no wish to leave his own company permanently, and, on Agnes de Mille's suggestion, Pleasant got hold of Antony Tudor.

During the war, Ashton experimented with his first "symphonic ballets," a form about which Ninette de Valois, in her book *Invitation to the Dance,* had previously expressed the liveliest disapproval. After a period of service in the Royal Air Force, he returned to the company in 1945. A year later the rising fortunes of British ballet, combined with a new pattern of state subsidy, enabled the company to migrate to the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and it was here that Ashton's first post-war ballet, *Symphonic Variations,* was originally given.

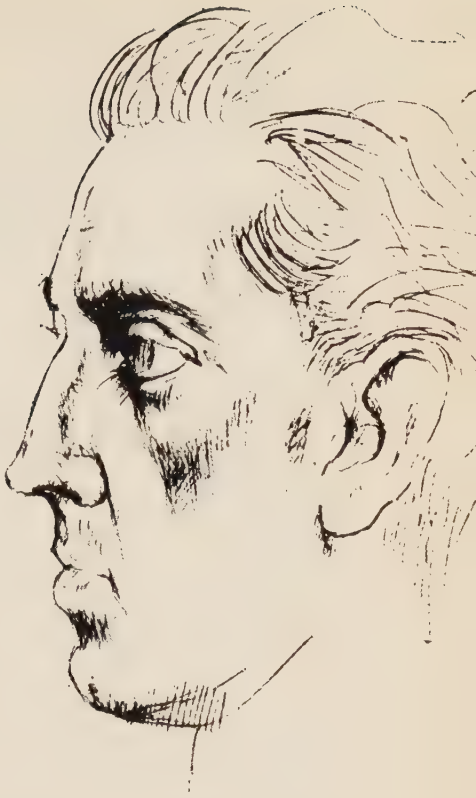
Since 1946 Ashton's career has been fairly tranquil. At the end of 1948 he created *Cinderella,* the first of the full-length British ballets. For many years he has been listed as Principal Choreographer to the Royal Ballet, and more recently, in the

Frederick Ashton in *La Péri* (EKO)

middle of the fifties, he has been listed as Associate Director, a title rather more indicative of the respect in which he is held than of any particular administrative responsibilities. In 1951 he was named Commander of the Order of the British Empire by the King for services to British ballet, so becoming the first man in the dance world to receive this honor. Although his work is almost entirely based in London, he receives many invitations to work for other companies, very few of which he accepts. He has, however, worked with the New York City Ballet, and the ballet company of La Scala, Milan, as well as producing the full-length *Romeo and Juliet* for the Royal Danish Ballet in Copenhagen.

Ever since the 1930's, when he was in some quarters briefly challenged by Tudor, Ashton has been the leading choreographer on the British scene. His *Symphonic Variations* was hailed as a masterpiece (a comparatively rare instance where London proved more enthusiastic about an Ashton work than did New York). Yet for all his distinction, and his very great popularity with British audiences, it is perhaps only in recent years that he has reached his present status in Britain. Before *Ondine* and his even more successful *La Fille Mal Gardée,* there was perhaps a slight note of disparagement discernible in the most common critical attitude to his work. S. Hurok has told the story of Ashton saying: "Everything I do is always a flop here in England, you know . . . they don't like me . . . I've done the best I can . . . there you are." Although this represents Ashton in one of his amiably pessimistic moods, it is a cheerfully dramatized exaggeration of something on occasion not too ridiculously short of the truth. Some of his best works, *Scènes de Ballet* and *Daphnis and Chloë* for example, were at first coolly received by most of the British press. *La Fille Mal Gardée* was, so far as I know, the first Ashton ballet ever to receive almost universal and unstinted praise from critics and audience alike. His reputation in England has never stood higher with either the public, the press, or his younger colleagues. Soon after its first performance, he told me with wry irony: "So now I'm an Old Master! . . . People must take me as they find me." He said it with a mixture of mild satisfaction, slight surprise and, typically, a touch of sadness.

THE CHOREOGRAPHER



THE MATTER OF ASSESSMENT

How can one really assess an artist still living? I change, you change, we all change, and circumstances change most of all. Imagine an assessment of Massine written in 1940, and then one written in 1960. At best one can only hope to offer an interim report that sees its subject in its contemporary context, remembering, perhaps ruefully, that a man could imagine he was writing a biography of a Mozart, only for history to discover that he had written about a Salieri.

The amount of objectivity one can, in all honesty, bring to an opinion is, I believe, nil, and even what look like facts are inevitably screened through a subjective filter. This then is perforce a personal view of Ashton's work, it clears up no "widely-held misconceptions" (although in the heat of the moment it may well claim to) and is in no sense intended as a definitive statement. Perhaps I had also better make it clear that I am

prejudiced about Ashton ballets. I find myself particularly, although not exclusively, sympathetic towards certain choreography, including Ashton's, and this study is in effect my attempt to rationalize that instinctive sympathy. No one ever writes about ballet, or any other art, with a virgin mind, unspotted by so much as an idea or an emotion. We look at a ballet burdened with our preconceptions, try valiantly to change them if we have to, register a reaction, and then sort out an opinion. I am continually horrified at the impreciseness of ballet criticism and my constant failure to give perfectly accurate voice to my reactions. In trying to make a personal analysis of a choreographer's work the difficulty in piecing together those reactions and then expressing them is, to my mind, fantastic, and the temptation to ginger up one's individual viewpoint with a little brief authority and to pass it off as an *ex cathedra* judgment is not easy to resist.

Then there is the danger of the writer's imagination. A music critic has a score to guide him, a literary critic the actual book or poem, but a ballet critic can bring nothing to his task but an imperfect memory and a fevered imagination. Recently I came across this very sensible remark by Arnold Haskell: "Just because Ashton's subtlety is purely plastic and never literary, it is impossible for the critic to write about it at length without making a fool of himself, through discovering a thousand and one things never intended by the creator. I have committed a number of critical sins while learning about ballet, but never that particular one." That I fear is a particular sin I am rather fond of, and after all a lot of things do exist that were never intended.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CHOREOGRAPHER

"And consciously all through my career I have been working to make the ballet independent of literary and pictorial motives, and to make it draw from the rich fount of classical ballet; for, to my way of thinking, all ballets that are not based on the classical ballet and do not create new dancing patterns and steps within its idiom, are, as it were, only tributaries of the main stream . . . If the ballet is to survive, it must survive through its dancing qualities, just as drama must survive through

the richness of the spoken word. In a Shakespearean play it is the richness of the language and the poetry that are paramount; the story is unimportant. And it is the same with all the greatest music, and dancing and ballets. In a ballet it is the dance that *must* be paramount." This statement, written by Ashton in 1951 as part of his "Notes on Choreography" contributed to Walter Sorell's *The Dance Has Many Faces,* finds its parallel in Balanchine's comment that: "The important thing in ballet is the movement itself, as it is sound which is important in a symphony. A ballet may contain a story, but the visual spectacle, not the story, is the essential element." It would perhaps be unfair to place too much emphasis upon the divergence between Ashton and Balanchine on the one hand and their predecessor, Fokine, on the other, as there is a great deal of common ground between all three of them; yet the second of Fokine's Five Principles that "dancing and mimetic gesture have no meaning in a ballet unless they serve as an expression of its dramatic action, and they must not be used as a mere divertissement or entertainment, having no connection with the scheme of the whole ballet" places a quite different value on the importance of dance in the scheme of ballet-making.

Although Ashton believes in the paramount importance of dancing, and is opposed to that heresy popularized, if not propounded, by Haskell, that all the arts combining in the composite art of ballet are of equal importance, in recent years at least his primary interest has not been centered upon plotless ballets. In his important contribution to a symposium on "The Subject Matter of Ballet" in *The Ballet Annual* for 1959, Ashton makes his position clear: "A ballet does not necessarily require a libretto, but it seems that most of the greatest ballets of the past have had librettos of a kind that supplemented choreographic expression and enabled the direct emotions that lend themselves best to ballets to move and excite a poetic response in the audience and yet were understandable dance dramas, clear and true in all purposes, i.e. *Giselle* and *Le Lac des Cygnes.* I think that ballets without librettos, popularly known as abstract ballets, though appearing to convey nothing but the exercise of pure dancing, should have a basic idea which is not necessarily apparent to the public, or a personal fount of emotion

from which the choreography springs. Otherwise, in my opinion, a cold complexity emerges which ceases to move an audience. Poetic evocation when sensitively handled can lead to masterpieces such as *Les Sylphides, Serenade,* etc., and leave an audience suspended in a trance-like response (that a story ballet can never achieve) because of their very directness and delicacy of poetic potency that needle-like reaches the heart."

The relationship between Ashton and the plotless ballet throughout his career is an interesting one. At the beginning, most of his ballets tended to be drawn from literary or pictorial

Alicia Markova and Frederick Ashton
in *Mephisto Valse*

sources. There were, however, almost from the first, significant exceptions to this rule. *Capriol Suite,* based on dances taken from Arbeau's sixteenth-century book, *Orchésographie,* while possessing an underlying basis and many narrative allusions, is fundamentally an essay in pure dancing. When a literary interest is introduced by two noblemen, one carrying a rose the other a sonnet, this is admirably blended with the dancing, and the storyline has been reduced to mere hints of appropriately Petrachian love-melancholy. In another early ballet, *Façade,* a similar freedom from narrative construction is apparent. In this comedy

divertissement there are plenty of anecdotal traces in the series of dance parodies, but no attempt has been made to suggest a story.

The first ballet in which Ashton virtually dispensed with characterization, hanging on to only the merest thread of an idea, was *Les Rendezvous.* Although based on the slight theme of young people meeting and parting in a park, this sparkling divertissement is really nothing more than a simple exercise in pure classical dancing. In its successor, four years later, *Les Patineurs,* Ashton gives the classical dance a slant of charac-

Nadia Nerina and Brian Shaw in
Les Rendezvous (Dominic)

terization by suggesting, often very cleverly, that the dancers are in fact on ice, but once again the pure dance element is uppermost, and the theme is never developed into anything resembling a story.

Right up to the outbreak of war, Ashton was, however, still concentrating his main efforts on narrative ballets, but eventually these assumed less and less importance in his creative output. His first war-time ballet, *Dante Sonata* (one of his very few works that does not use pointe shoes, but classical for all that), clearly showed the influence of the Massine symphonic

ballets. Here the Children of Light and the Children of Darkness locked in allegorical struggle came close to the plotless ballet, while in *The Wanderer* even the comparatively clear-cut allegory of *Dante Sonata* gave way to an altogether mistier symbolism.

When Ashton returned to the company after the war, he produced his first completely plotless ballet, *Symphonic Variations.* Even here, although the actual choreography is completely free of any literary suggestion, Ashton started with a dominant theme in mind, that of a ballet based on the seasons, and began his work with a quite complicated and detailed program. All these ideas were eventually refined away and completely eliminated before the work reached the stage. Something of the same process was employed when he produced his second plotless ballet, *Valses Nobles et Sentimentales.* This was a complete revision of the early *Valentine's Eve,* but in this second version all strictly literal associations between the characters had been abandoned. Even in *Scènes de Ballet,* perhaps the purest of all his plotless works, Ashton once again started with some kind of theme tucked away at the back of his notebook. After these three ballets—all of them earning a place among Ashton's finest—the choreographer drifted away from the plotless ballet, and has only rarely returned. His next work after *Scènes de Ballet* was the symphonic *Don Juan,* which was perhaps comparable to his pre-war Romantic ballet, *Apparitions,* yet at the same time had no complicated narrative. He has also created the three special divertissements, *Homage to the Queen, Variations on a Theme of Purcell* and *Birthday Offering,* all in the pure, classical dance idiom, and more recently he has produced *La Valse,* which again has no direct story. However, the chaste ambiguity of the impersonal *Symphonic Variations* and *Scènes de Ballet,* seems, at least for the moment, to be a thing of Ashton's past.

In a sense I think that this period when Ashton wholeheartedly experimented with the plotless ballet perhaps represented his final apprenticeship as a choreographer. Ashton matured late as an artist; and it would have been difficult to forecast his post-war career from his pre-war promise. There are clearly many factors to be taken into account when considering

this late flowering of his abilities, yet one obviously important reason is to be found in the actual circumstances of his early career. Normally a choreographer develops within a fully-fledged ballet company, but Ashton, together with Tudor, de Valois and Howard, was an exception to this rule. Ashton's conception of classical choreography tended to out-distance the classical technique of the dancers with whom he was working, although here and there were exceptions, such as Margot Fonteyn, Harold Turner, and even the then-youthful Michael Somes. Yet by and large it was not perhaps until post-war years that the efforts of de Valois provided him with all the dancers he needed.

It is possibly curious that Ashton, who started his career on the pocket-handkerchief stage of the Mercury Theatre, should have taken so easily and readily to the Opera House dimensions of Covent Garden. He himself feels that his first apprenticeship at the Ballet Club was ideal in that it taught him his craft in circumstances that offered no opportunity for faking or shoddiness. Chamber ballet, with the nearest spectators only a foot away from the stage, demanded an unusually high degree of choreographic originality. Mass effects were naturally impossible, choreographic padding was glaringly exposed, and characterization had to be uncommonly deft to stand up to the close scrutiny of the audience. Ashton, with his inborn talent for improvisation, spurred on by Rambert and caught up in the hot-house atmosphere of the Ballet Club, obviously soon developed a most remarkable technical facility and craftsmanship. This facility is apparent in all of his early ballets, but perhaps *Les Masques,* a perfectly finished minor work, provides the best example. Within its limitations it is exquisite. A chic and superficial comedy, there is a heartless cleverness about the ballet that precisely matches its Poulenc music and brilliantly stylish Fedorovitch designs. The danger of such effortless juvenilia is their tendency to remove the promptings of aspiration and struggle.

Nevertheless the choreographic technique he acquired during his Ballet Club days stood Ashton in good stead when he moved first to Sadler's Wells, and eventually to Covent Garden. Moreover, although in his early days he had to work on a small scale, he always thought in terms of the opera house, and indeed

some of his pre-war ballets, such as *Les Patineurs,* were not seen to their best advantage until years later when they arrived on the larger stage. Yet neither the development of the company nor its migration to Covent Garden, can quite explain by themselves the post-war maturing of Ashton's abilities. There were at least two other factors at work here. The first was the gradual development of Fonteyn's talents as a dancer, and the symbiotic effect Ashton and Fonteyn had on one another will have to be explored more fully later. Yet perhaps more than anything Ashton discovered a stimulus and challenge in the post-

Anya Linden as The White Skater with corps de ballet in *Les Patineurs* (Roger Wood)

war situation he found himself in, that had been lacking before. When he was apart from the company, in the Armed Forces, he lost for the time being his hitherto fairly generally acknowledged supremacy as the leading British choreographer. Both Robert Helpmann in Britain and Antony Tudor in America were having successes, while he was waiting in the wings. This, I think, gave a new edge to his determination which, coupled with his new opportunities, led to *Symphonic Variations* and his mature mastery over his medium.

That the Royal Ballet should eventually wish to produce

its own full-evening ballets was probably the inevitable outcome of the artistic policy followed by de Valois from the beginning. As a former member of the Diaghilev company she has always retained the greatest respect for the traditions of the Ballets Russes, and naturally her interest was at first concentrated on the one-act work. Yet as soon as it became practicable, she began reviving some of the old multi-act, Maryinsky ballets from which Diaghilev, partly from artistic inclination and partly from economic expediency, had turned. By the time the war cut short her company's development, de Valois already had *Giselle, Coppélia,* the full-length *Swan Lake, Nutcracker* and *Sleeping Beauty* installed in the repertory. From there it was only a short step to commissioning native full-length ballets, a form to which the company, audience and critics alike had become conditioned. By 1948 the one-act work had dominated Western ballet for over forty years, but everything seemed propitious for at least a partial swing back to the full-evening ballet. In 1946 Serge Lifar had produced his four-act *Chota Roustaveli* in Monte Carlo for his Nouveau Ballet de Monte Carlo, and this work based on the Georgian fairy tale *A Hero in a Leopard Skin*

Michael Somes and Margot Fonteyn, foreground; June Brae, center, and Robert Helpmann, above, in *Dante Sonata* (Felix Fonteyn)

was seen in London later the same year. Then in 1947 Andrée Howard created the first British multi-act ballet, *The Sailor's Return.* This two-act work, based on a David Garnett novel, aroused more interest than Lifar's Georgian epic, but neither was conceived in the classical idiom envisaged by the Royal Ballet. Covent Garden's choice fell upon Serge Prokofiev's *Cinderella,* which in nearly every important respect was a modern restatement of the nineteenth-century three-act formula. Ashton was the obvious choreographer for the job, and his success with *Cinderella* has been followed by *Sylvia, Ondine,* and *La Fille Mal Gardée* for Covent Garden, and *Romeo and Juliet* for the Royal Danish Ballet.

Although Ashton in recent years has turned more and more towards the narrative ballet, his belief in the prime importance of dancing remains undiminished. Nothing could show this more clearly than the comparison between his version of Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* and the Bolshoi version choreographed by Leonid Lavrovsky. Both in their very different ways are magnificent ballets, and although I have a personal preference for the choreographic splendors of the fashionably-denigrated Lavrovsky production, there are long passages of dancing in the Ashton that have an inventive beauty, which leaves Lavrovsky's choreography earth-bound and gasping. Although a number of authorities in the West have announced, with all the sensibility of well-trained parrots, that the Bolshoi *Romeo and Juliet* is "an old-fashioned spectacle," it is in fact the Ashton ballet that has its roots in the Petipa tradition, while the Lavrovsky is a fully-developed dance-drama all in accordance with Fokine's Five Principles.

Not the least interesting aspect of Ashton's development as a choreographer is the way in which he has continued to produce ballets with unabated energy for a period of thirty-four years, and certainly at the moment shows no signs of flagging inspiration. Asked to account for this, Ashton just shrugs his shoulders, looks rather pleased and says: "You see, like Balanchine, I'm a *classical* choreographer." Remembering the number of other *classical* choreographers, apart from Ashton and Balanchine, who have gone to the wall in their time, I fancy there is rather more to it than that. Partly it must be a matter of creative tem-

perament (Wordsworth wrote little of importance after thirty-five; Verdi blazed on into his nineties), yet also it is probably no accident that both Ashton and Balanchine are attached to permanent ballet companies, backed by permanent ballet schools. There has been a rhythm and order to their careers as one successive generation of dancers has succeeded the next, and ballet seasons lap over them like waves. They have never had to worry (at least not for a long time) where they were going to place the next ballet, and have been left quietly to get on with their jobs, knowing full well that if their inspiration here and there flickers, their sheer craftsmanship will carry them through. In considering the long careers enjoyed by Ashton and Balanchine, the names of de Valois and Kirstein should not be forgotten.

A CHOREOGRAPHER AT WORK

In their attitude to the ballet rehearsal, the choreographer's act of creation, choreographers fall into two classes; one says "Look!" the other says "Show?" Some choreographers know pretty well what they want before they get to the studio; the music has suggested to them such and such an enchaînement, or that that idea can be conveyed by this dance image. Often they have made notes (de Valois does for example) and their main task is to teach the ballet to the dancers. Ashton likes to create his ballets on the floor of the studio. A dancer once described him to me as "the best ballet critic in the world; he knows instinctively what he wants to see, lets his dancers dance until he recognizes it and then cries 'Stop!' "

Ashton works almost like a sculptor, moulding the actual bodies of his dancers into the shape of the choreography. He has an idea, perhaps of the actual dance, perhaps more of the style he wants, perhaps, even more tenuously, only of the mood and atmosphere he wishes to express. What follows is a sort of creative quest in which the dancer himself often plays an active part. Ashton likes to let the choreography grow out of the music, he adds here, takes away there, all the time working towards the final product. He has written: "I think the choreographer should always try to work *with* his dancers, drawing expression from them rather than imposing actions on them" (in an essay,

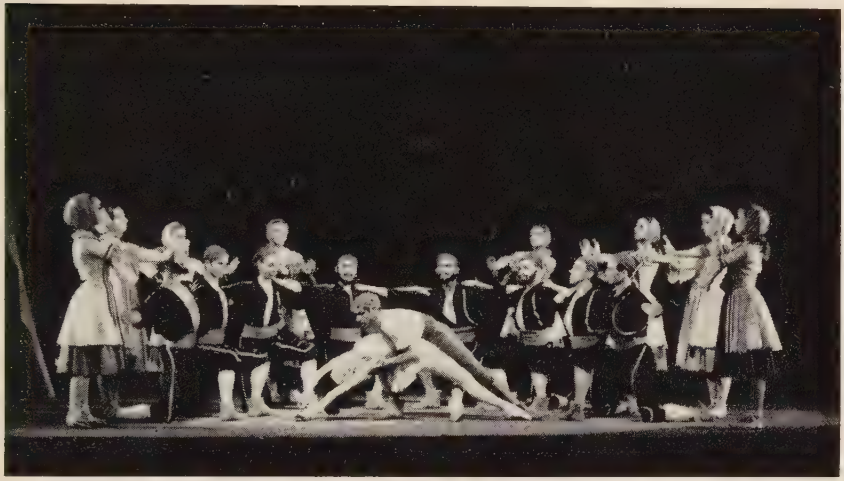
"On Being a Choreographer" from *Mike Davis at The Royal Ballet*).

Watching Ashton in rehearsal it would be easy to think of him as a kind of referee, or imagine that he was supervising more than directing. Nothing could be further from the truth; his authority is unforced but unquestioned. At times it may look as though the ballet is being created by a committee of inquiry, but the final result will still bear the unmistakable Ashton signature. As Margaret Dale has said: "At first everyone listens carefully to the music; sometimes dancers will suggest steps to him, and frequently he accepts these 'offers' as a starting point; though ultimately one finds that he adds to each step some very personal decoration or simplification. One great virtue of this method is that it gives each dancer a strong feeling that he also is contributing to the creation."

The danger of Ashton's method is that the ballet is almost too closely tailored to the physique and temperament of its original cast. Ashton himself recognizes this, and indeed sometimes tends to over-stress it. He dislikes "second casts" in principle, sometimes almost on principle—and so far as humanly possible he keeps the cast of a ballet unchanged. For two years no one but Fonteyn, Somes, Alexander Grant and Julia Farron danced the principal roles in *Ondine,* and after nearly ten years, no one but Grant has danced Bryaxis in *Daphnis and Chloë*, while only Brian Shaw has danced the part he created in *Symphonic Variations* (apart from the time Shaw was in the Armed Forces, when with one exception the role was exclusively given by Grant). As an Ashton role has so much of its original dancer built into it, someone else naturally has difficulty assuming it with the same sort of authority, the same air of rightness. No one, for example, has ever danced the Blue Skater in *Les Patineurs* with quite the manner of Harold Turner; yet perhaps half-a-dozen dancers have given extremely rewarding performances in the ballet. One day in the future a dancer who physically and temperamentally resembles Turner will be cast as the Blue Skater, and the part, although not necessarily better danced in any usual sense, will then take on a renewed significance.

A wise, old musician once told me that the way he judged

a conductor's handling of an orchestra was in whether he could hear the transitions in the music; if he couldn't, the man was a great conductor. It is perhaps primarily something of this same "seamless" quality that Ashton is aiming for during rehearsals. He is constantly trying to fine down his choreography and to achieve the flow that gives the dance its vital sense of spontaneity. In order to obtain this, Ashton is willing to work on a single pas de deux for hours, and sometimes his rehearsals proceed very slowly; but almost always his approach is patient and understanding. Once the ballet has left the studio and is at the dress rehearsal stage, his manner usually changes. His naturally



Margot Fonteyn and Alexander Grant, center, in *Daphnis* and *Chloë* (Baron)

pessimistic disposition will already have convinced him that he has made a flop. And as soon as he has seen the ballet actually being danced, it rarely, if ever, lives up to his hopes or even his more modest expectations. At this juncture he is by turns depressed, irascible and resigned. During the final dress rehearsal of *La Fille Mal Gardée,* Ashton's voice was to be heard imploring the dancers over the "intercom" to ever greater efforts; "Higher, higher, higher." But they will never be high enough.

Ashton is fairly happy to work with an already existing score, although in a narrative ballet from choice he will sometimes prefer to commission the music. In *Ondine,* for example,

he worked in very close collaboration with the German composer, Hans Werner Henze. First Ashton prepared the scenario in considerable detail, and then he gave Henze a strict minutage of the type and amount of music he wanted. But this close relationship is rare with Ashton and I suspect he is happier when he has the music already to hand before starting work. With modern scores Ashton prefers to work with a tape rather than a piano transcription, feeling that without the actual sound of the orchestration in his ears it is difficult to reflect the coloration in his choreography. Nowadays a choreographer's work does not often just start and end with the choreography, for usually he is the prime mover in supervising the complete production and commissioning the work of his collaborators. For many years Ashton had at his elbow two wise counsellors in Constant Lambert and, more particularly, Sophie Fedorovitch. Both of them were frequently his collaborators. Lambert composed *Horoscope* for him and arranged the music for many of his ballets, while Fedorovitch designed eleven of his works from *A Tragedy of Fashion* onwards. But their influence extended beyond the ballets with which they were nominally associated, and when Lambert died in 1951, being followed two years later by Fedorovitch, Ashton suffered an artistic as well as a very grave personal loss. Left to himself, his choice of collaborators for both music and décor has not always, in my opinion, proved fortunate. On the other hand his casting of dancers to interpret his work has always been impeccable.

His long partnership with Margot Fonteyn is one of the glories of British ballet. Ashton says that when he first met Fonteyn "I found her stubborn, elegant, unyielding, lacking in sharpness—but musical. She thought I was mad." What Ashton owes to Fonteyn, and what Fonteyn owes to Ashton cannot be disentangled. Their careers have run along such parallel lines that it is impossible to decide whether he is the kind of choreographer he is because of her dancing, or whether she is the kind of dancer she is because of his choreography. But just as a vein of Ashton's work has developed from this interaction between himself and Fonteyn, a similar, if less significant, relationship has sprung up from his work with other dancers. Alexander Grant is one obvious example, and in *La Fille Mal*

Gardée Ashton's collaboration with Nadia Nerina and David Blair appears to have opened up a new style in his choreography, recognizably his, yet more brilliant, buoyant and earthy, than the ethereal colloquy between himself and Fonteyn.

ASHTON IN THE THEATRE

One of the pitfalls of ballet criticism seems to be our frequent habit of talking about a ballet as if it were a play, and tacitly accepting that the dramatic values of both are the same. It is almost as easy to run to the opposite extreme and think of ballet as nothing but a series of visual images set to music, and to talk as if it were an elaborate form of plastic geometry. In a sense these two contrasting views represent the classic division between form and content. Although there may be differing opinions on how much value is to be placed upon it, there is fairly general agreement as to what constitutes the form of a ballet. When the question of content is raised, approaches and opinions become more diverse. There are those who believe that ballet should ideally tell a story, or pin down character with the same transfixing needle of a play. If this were in fact the aim of ballet, then choreographers would be better employed in trying to become playwrights, and ballet would be a second-rate art trying to do imperfectly that which only a play can do with genuine significance. It is perhaps this feeling that has in the past led many of ballet's most perceptive admirers to take a stand against "meaning" in ballet and to declare themselves resolutely in favor of form above all else. Thus choreographic qualities such as musicality and inventiveness (by which was often meant choreographic coinages) were praised without a great deal of regard to their particular use or meaning. Partly as a result of this, and partly perhaps as an echo of Diaghilev's execrable cry of despair "Etonne-moi, Jean!," ballet still puts a higher premium on "originality" than any other art.

To my mind ballet should be exquisitely poised between form and content; the function of ballet is to show up life, and it achieves that function through its . . . and here, being at a loss for a word, I will call it its drama. A general sense of the dramatic can be found even in such non-representational arts as music or abstract painting. When we talk of dramatic chords and the reso-

lution of a theme, or decide that an abstract picture or a mobile is, say, whimsical, we are not speaking entirely in metaphors, and while it would be naive to construct a program to a Mozart symphony, it would be impossible, and perhaps heartless, not to be aware of the symphony's dramatic impact and even implications.

Even plotless ballet, which is nothing but men and women dancing, is anything but non-representational or "non-human," and while we may honestly believe that we are appreciating it visually (or as a space/time relationship with the music, if we want to be fancy about it) it evokes a sort of drama, which, although distinct from the narrative business of story-telling, is probably still the fundamentally important element of our pleasure. I think the dramatic quality of dancing can probably be shown better in these plotless ballets than in narrative works, for while they share the same basic nature, there is little temptation to judge plotless ballets against the criteria of plays. We have to react to words intellectually, like a man. Part of us still reacts to movements more instinctively, like an animal. Here then is the drama of a threatening gesture, the response we feel for open arms, the fear (now usually civilized into a thrill of cathartic pleasure) of a sudden movement. It is within the power of ballet (organized, orchestrated movement) to play on our instincts like a flute. The sixteenth-century poet, Sir John Davies, recognized this in his remarkable poem, *Orchestra or, A Poem on Dancing,* when he wrote:

> Sing then, Terpsichore, my light muse, sing
> His gentle art and cunning courtesy!
> You, lady, can remember everything,
> For you are the daughter of Queen Memory.

But the dramatic nature of dancing obviously does not end with its subconscious appeal (and here I stress "subconscious" as strongly as "appeal") to our vestigial instincts and atavistic race memories. The drama in pure dancing also has its intellectual aspect, though the thought processes involved may be the unconscious ones of recognition, association and even identification, rather than analysis. It is the particular quality of plotless ballet that the drama is at once non-specific, as in music, and yet self-evidently human, as in a play.

So far I have been talking about plotless ballet, because here the dramatic element can be isolated as it were from narrative and specifics, leaving the observer to make of it what he will in the free associations of his mind. But this same dramatic element is present in all forms of ballet. Although dance is a wonderfully expressive medium when it tries to convey emotion and emotional states, it is not very much use for story-telling. Balanchine's celebrated law that there are no sisters-in-law in ballet, limits its narrative faculty to a severe extent, and the discovery of any number of second-cousins twice removed tucked away in the program notes is no substitute for the explicit statement of a play. A man in a play identifies himself every time he opens his mouth. He is particular, and surrounds himself with particularities. A man in a ballet should identify himself every time he moves, but his personality is much more general, his motives less finite, even his character less formulated than the man in a play. Characters talking together on the stage indicate their relationship quite clearly within certain—possibly quite broad—limits of interpretation. The relationships between the characters in a ballet, however, are necessarily, subtly, more ambiguous, slightly more open to imaginative comprehension, and very often more willing to lend themselves to symbolism and the general identification of mankind.

Looking back I realize that what I have called "drama" in ballet I could perhaps have just as well have called poetry, or the "poetic principle," but "drama" probably better indicates its essentially theatrical nature. Call it what you will, it is, I submit, for the impress of this quality upon our instincts, our imagination and our intellect that we go to ballet, and because the medium of ballet is a visual and aural pattern of dance, music and gesture, it follows that the ballets most completely achieving the dramatic possibilities of dancing will also be those that are most visually and aurally satisfying. And if we doubt this we only have to ask ourselves, why are they visually and aurally satisfying in the first place?

This "dramatic" quality in Ashton's choreography is present, to a greater or lesser extent, in all of his work. In *Symphonic Variations,* one of his best ballets, it can be seen time and time again in the gently-paced pas de deux with all its celestial mean-

derings; in the powerful solo variation created for Shaw, where the mood becomes urgent or dynamic; in the final serenely joyous peroration to the ballet when the six dancers echo the work's opening. I find it difficult to imagine that anyone could see a related narrative in a work like *Symphonic Variations* or *Scènes de Ballet* (although give the characters names and put them into "narrative" costumes and more finite relationships could well appear), yet such ballets are full of dramatic overtones to which we respond emotionally without recognizing in any concrete manner. It is part of Ashton's strength that he does not overload drama on to the music's structure, but rather reflects the actual

David Blair and Rowena Jackson with the corps in *Scènes de Ballet* (Roy Round)

drama inherent in the music, giving it physical form and shape.

Despite Ashton's skill at realizing the dramatic implications of music through dancing, he is at his least inspired when dealing with an involved story. During the war he produced *The Quest,* based on the First Book of Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene.* It came at the end of his "allegorical period" (its immediate predecessors had been *Dante Sonata, The Wise Virgins* and *The Wanderer*) and obviously Spenser's "darke conceit" on "the fashioning of a gentleman" held out a strong attraction for Ashton. For all this, the narrative with St. George, Una, Archimago, Duessa, the Seven Deadly Sins and all the rest of Spenser's medi-

eval tapestry, never succeeded in coming to life. The ballet, which had a few good moments of pure dancing, proved incomprehensible without knowledge of the poem, and even with such knowledge completely failed to add anything to Spenser's original epic conception. Yet, a few years earlier, when in *Nocturne,* Ashton used a tawdry sentimental story of a poor but honest Flower Girl, a Rich Young Man and an equally Rich Young Girl for whom he jilts her, he gave this dime-store novelette a quality of poetic truth that was bewilderingly moving.

Clearly part of the reason for his success with *Nocturne* and his failure with *The Quest* is the old one—perennial in ballet—of some themes being suitable for the severely limited narrative faculty of dancing and some not. Even so this is to simplify and miss the point that Ashton is at his best when dealing with straightforward themes, preferably those lending themselves to symbolism.

Symbolism runs through Ashton's ballets from *Capriol Suite* onwards, where the slight device of the courtiers bearing a rose or a sonnet indicated, by the merest gesture, a whole world of Renaissance courtliness. It could be seen even more obviously, if more ambiguously, in the crucified figures of *Dante Sonata,* or in the *parade sauvage* of his remarkable Rimbaud ballet *Illuminations,* where symbolist figures burst like bubbles in a fantastic series of dance images. Yet it is always in his choice of theme that Ashton most clearly shows his hand. Many of his ballets are concerned with unapproachable or unattainable love, like *Apparitions, Rinaldo and Armida, Picnic at Tintagel,* or *Ondine.* These allegories of love all have a great deal in common. They are Romantic conceptions stemming, if you like, from nineteenth-century ballet, where from *La Sylphide* onwards the pursuit of the uncatchable-she was the prescribed occupation for ballet heroes. Many choreographers, although perhaps more in Europe than in the United States, have attempted to utilize the themes of Romantic ballet, and very few have succeeded. In *Le Baiser de la Fée, La Valse* and more especially *Night Shadow,* Balanchine has very interestingly adapted nineteenth-century Romanticism to his own choreographic ends, but it is only Ashton who seems to move and breathe freely in this spiritual atmosphere.

Where Ashton differs from the *pasticheurs* of ballet Romanti-

Margot Fonteyn in *Nocturne* (Edward Mandinian)

cism—whose work can be seen gumming up nearly every student display—is in his approach. He seems to have accepted that what is old-fashioned about, say *Giselle* or *Swan Lake*, is not the theme but the presentation. To modern eyes these old ballets represent a still valid poetic truth produced with the paraphernalia of the old ballet tradition. Ashton has tried, perhaps unconsciously, to capture something like that same truth, yet giving it a contempo-

Nadia Nerina in *La Fille Mal Gardée* (Houston Rogers)

rary utterance. Consequently while accepting Romantic themes, he has rejected the nineteenth-century manner of ballet structure, where dance and mime passages are interspersed in much the same manner as *aria* and *recitative* in non-Wagnerian opera of the same period. (In this *La Fille Mal Gardée*, being a conscious reconstruction, is, of course, a special case.) In the choreographic style of a ballet apparently so conventional as his *Sylvia*, Ashton

has adopted an almost purely Fokinean (or Noverrean) approach to his subject matter, so that wherever possible the narrative is entrusted to expressive dance, and where mime is unavoidable it is produced in terms of naturalistic dance-gesture.

So far I have concentrated on Ashton in his Romantic manner, but the same choreographic eloquence enables him to encompass almost every kind of ballet except the deeply tragic. Tragedy is alien to Ashton, so that even when he approaches a theme that might in other hands prove tragic, he invests it with a sort of elegiac tenderness and so softens it in the process. The themes of ballets like *Ondine, Rinaldo and Armida* and even *Nocturne,* are all deeply felt and deeply affecting, but lack the cathartic power of tragedy. (It is interesting, incidentally, to consider just *who* has conveyed tragedy in a dance work. Only the young Tudor and the mature Graham, perhaps. Certainly as an art form, ballet seems inhospitable to the tragic muse.) Comedy in ballet is another matter, and here Ashton has shown a considerable range.

In his earliest comedy ballets Ashton, still deeply influenced by the Kochno period of the Diaghilev ballet, strove, often successfully, for a sophisticated wit. In *Les Masques,* a frivolous mix-up at a masked party, his characterizations are neatly observed, and the whole ballet, not least its elegant black-and-white designs of Fedorovitch, has about it an amusingly brittle wit. The humor of *Façade* is broader, and these dance parodies of the twenties show a good-natured gusto that was to become a characteristic of Ashton's comic manner. In his ill-fated, ill-considered *Les Sirènes,* Ashton carried knockabout farce beyond its limit, but in *Cinderella* the burlesque dances for the Ugly Sisters are given with a telling subtlety that enables the Sisters to become very real people. It is the same thoughtful robustness that can be seen in *La Fille Mal Gardée,* where the unflagging, bucolic humors of the piece have a whole-hearted vigor. It would still be wrong to think of Ashton simply as a slapstick comic, and *La Fille Mal Gardée* again demonstrates his subtlety as well as his rumbustiousness. There is a quality of truth in its minute detailing (such as when the Widow Simone means to throw a flower pot at the intruding Colas, until her frugal practicality gets the better of her, and she contents her-

self with throwing merely the flower pot's contents), and here Ashton gets to the heart of the comic spirit.

La Fille Mal Gardée equally shows the way in which Ashton colors comedy with a certain amount of pathos. The character of Alain, the rejected bumpkin suitor, is given a nicely calculated tincture of sadness that in Alexander Grant's hands becomes genuinely moving. This is a sadness, like that suggested by the under-privileged Sister in *Cinderella,* which adds depth to the whole comedy.

In my view no account of Ashton's comedies would be complete without mentioning his sadly neglected pre-war ballet, *A Wedding Bouquet.* This mad and zany collaboration with Gertrude Stein and Lord Berners has a gaily inconsequential wit, together with a menacing under-current of atmosphere, that gives the work a wry flavor all of its own. The scene is a French provincial wedding at about the turn of the century, and the comedy—complete with simpering bride, rakish bridegroom, discarded mistresses and undesirable relations—is sketched in with a deftness worthy of René Clair. Ashton rarely, if ever, relies on situation humor for his laughs. In *A Wedding Bouquet* the tango danced by the Bridegroom with his rejected mistresses is joyously funny in itself, and his pas de deux with the Bride is a superbly underplayed parody of a Petipa pas de deux, much more deadly and more amusing than the one Tudor later incorporated into his own *Gala Performance.* Classical parody has always appealed to Ashton and he returned to it in *Cinderella* and in his dances for Alain in *La Fille Mal Gardée,* the latter also having two other superb examples of Ashton's comic method in its pas de trois (where the hero Colas interlopes on the comic duet between Alain and Lise) and the deliciously inventive Clog Dance for Widow Simone.

What kind of ballet is an "Ashton ballet," what kind of themes seem to be particularly sympathetic to his style of ballet-making? Almost unintentionally I seem to have grouped Ashton's ballets into the sadly arbitrary categories of plotless works, romances and comedies, and this is a wild over-simplification. A great number of his ballets—indeed probably the majority—refuse to be pigeon-holed in the tidy recesses beloved of the critical mind. *The Wanderer,* for example, is a "symphonic"

work that owes something both in its structure and allegorical spirit to Massine. Although it has a theme (a man wandering through life in quest of salvation), it clearly foreshadows the plotless works; equally it could be considered under the heading of romantic. The later *Don Juan* is in something of the same ambivalent position, as is, in a different way, one of the greatest of his pre-war successes, *Horoscope*. Then some of his plotless ballets, *Symphonic Variations, Valses Nobles et Sentimentales* and *La Valse* are full of romantic feeling. The pathos Ashton so often brings to his comedy ballets is also an extension of his

Michael Somes and Svetlana Beriosova with attendant Stars in *Cinderella,* Act III (Roy Round)

romanticism. *Cinderella* is, I suppose, a comedy, yet the theme of romantic love runs strongly throughout it, and only recently Ashton has made a few changes in the role of the Jester to heighten the ballet's poignancy. For that matter, the big ensemble dance for the Stars and Seasons in the first act of the ballet is a vintage example of Ashton's plotless choreography. Should *Les Patineurs* and *Les Rendezvous* be classed as comedies? One can, of course, subdivide the original three basic categories. Obviously there is a difference between a plotless work like *Scènes de Ballet* and his gala divertissements, *Homage to the*

Queen and *Birthday Offering*, then again a distinction might be drawn between *Daphnis and Chloë* and *Sylvia* (perhaps one could call them "pastorals"?) which have happy endings, and *Rinaldo and Armida* and *Ondine*.

The difficulty attending such particular niceness in definition is that of producing a list beside which even Polonius's "pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical" will seem lackadaisically imprecise. What is however important is to recognize the three strands found in Ashton's work—pure dancing, romantic love and comedy—all bound up with a quality

The arrival of La Bolero (Margot Fonteyn) in *Les Sirènes* (Baron)

that I think the eighteenth century might have termed "sentiment" and which we are forced to call, with rather less accuracy, either "feeling" or "compassion." These are the basic elements of Ashton, and in some form of unequal combination will be found in all his ballets.

Ashton is first and last a classical choreographer, and his technique is drawn almost exclusively from the *danse d'école*. At first glance *Dante Sonata*—with its bare feet, Duncan draperies and swirling movement—might be thought non-classical in inspiration, but, as Robert Helpmann, writing in Peter Noble's

symposium *British Ballet*, has said: "The lines of the whole ballet are infused with Ashton's classical training and instinct (as I well know since I have danced in it)." I have mentioned earlier the debt Ashton owes to the influence of Petipa, and already drawn the comparison between the Fokine-style *Romeo and Juliet* created by the Bolshoi's Lavrovsky, and the Ashton version, which draws its strength from earlier traditions of ballet-making. The difficulty is not in showing where the influence of Petipa (or rather the whole Maryinsky method) starts, but in indicating where it ends. Ashton is not an old-fashioned choreographer. Just as in *The Rake's Progress,* for example, Igor Stravinsky rejects Wagnerian music-drama and its later developments and goes back to an earlier operatic tradition to make a fresh start, so Ashton has rejected much of the Fokinean dance-drama. However Stravinsky does not compose as if the music immediately preceding him did not exist, and in Ashton's choreography one can similarly discern a mixed influence. In him, as in Balanchine, can be seen elements both of the old Imperial Russian Ballet and the Diaghilev Ballets Russes.

It seems possible that Ashton's sense of choreographic structure has been evolved from the Maryinsky ballets. The obvious pointer here is that Ashton has returned to the multi-act ballet once abandoned by Diaghilev and his associates, and the indications are that in the future Ashton will concentrate more and more on this form, with the *new* one-act Ashton becoming a rarity. Yet it would be easy to make too much of what is partly an accident of economics and history. Doubtless Diaghilev and Fokine had the soundest possible artistic reasons for turning against the multi-act ballet, but, having regard to the financial conditions of their company and their need to win Western audiences back to the then unfashionable art of ballet, it was also the convenient and expedient thing to do. When Ashton and the Royal Ballet returned to the multi-act ballet, both the economic situation and the taste of their particular audience were quite different from those faced by the Ballets Russes, and once again—artistic considerations apart—the course taken was sound economics. Possibly of more significance than his use of the multi-act structure, is Ashton's apparent preference for

divertissements. Nearly all his ballets, long or short, are cast in the form of a divertissement, and their scores commissioned or selected with this structure in mind. Apart from a few flirtations with "symphonic" music—*Dante Sonata, Don Juan, Daphnis and Chloë,* etc.—Ashton has shown little inclination to use continuous scores, usually preferring to build his ballets up piece by piece in the Petipa manner. However it is noteworthy in *Ondine* that where Ashton commissioned his first (and as yet only) full-length score, he dictated a free form in which all the dances were integrated into a continuous statement, and the choreography arose naturally from the theme with no concessions being made to the traditional fabric of the old, full-length classic.

Where Ashton also appears to have something in common with the older ballet-masters is in the matter of characterization. Most modern choreographers attempt to individualize in some detail all the characters in a ballet. Occasionally, as in *Daphnis and Chloë,* Ashton employs this same method, but more often he is content to paint in one or two figures, leaving the rest sketchy and stylized. The obvious example of this is once again to be found in *Ondine.* Here, Ondine herself has been characterized with remarkable detail, but by contrast all the other persons are left in barely sketched outline—a device which concentrates attention upon the ballerina in *Ondine,* much as it is concentrated on Aurora in *The Sleeping Beauty,* or Odette/Odile in *Swan Lake.*

Because Ashton has rarely, if ever (according to your definition), produced dance-dramas, and also because of his method of "selective characterization," his very great skill in portraying character is not always recognized. Another potent factor in this under-estimation has, strangely enough, been his incredibly successful alliance with Margot Fonteyn. Her portrayals in Ashton's ballets have often been so exquisitely acted, and given with such a compelling air of identification and truth, that many writers have fallen into the trap of commenting on her performances as if she made up the character as she went along, with Ashton's contribution being limited to an always agreeable, and sometimes even sensitive, arrangement of the steps. Such an attitude does the choreographer a great deal less

Margot Fonteyn in the second *La Péri*

than justice. Unquestionably Fonteyn is unsurpassed and perhaps unsurpassable as Chloë, Cinderella or Ondine, and such roles could never have been created without her, yet, as I think Fonteyn herself would be the first to agree, they owe infinitely more to Ashton than to his ballerina. Fonteyn was the muse, and as such her inspiration has had an incalculable effect, but it was Ashton who was the poet.

Margot Fonteyn and Robert Helpmann in *Don Juan* (Angus McBean)

Ashton's conception of Ondine is remarkably detailed and constitutes one of the finest pieces of dance characterization in modern ballet. Right from her first entrance, when materializing from her ornamental grotto, this water nymph enters her brave new world of earth and sky with delighted wonder. As she plays with her shadow (a delicate idea which Ashton adapted from Jules Perrot's famous *pas de l'ombre*), the whole character of this

fairy creature, half woman, half sprite, seems to be summed up in the darting phrases of her dance and her childlike absorption in her new toy. As she pauses on the ground, she suddenly sees her shadow joined by that of an intruder. At first she looks at it with bewilderment, until turning she comes face to face with Palemon. They dance together in a fragmentary pas de deux in which Ashton captures all the fast shifting emotions of this strange meeting. Timorous as a maiden and capricious as a sprite, Ondine's character emerges from the choreography. At the end of their meeting she stretches out, with a tentative gesture that is both tender and inquisitive, to touch this strange new creature who has entered her life. Placing her hand upon Palemon she unexpectedly feels the beat of his heart and flees, panic-stricken, into the forest. This characterization, coming from both the choreography and production, is equally perceptive throughout the ballet.

Ondine shows Ashton's sense of characterization possibly at its highest peak, yet this aspect of his skill is found in all his ballets. The role of Cinderella is, in a different key, almost as eloquent. Her fleet pas de bourrées in the kitchen scene, and her gay, slightly ironical, and very wistful waltz with the broom catch Cinderella's character to perfection, while nothing could be more descriptive of her wonderment at the Ball than her first processional entry down the steps, just as no other step could quite catch the exact quality of her hectic happiness as do the chainé turns in her solo dance.

Although many of Ashton's finest characterizations have been inspired by Fonteyn, there are plenty of other roles that might be cited as evidence of his ability to portray life and people in ballet. Lise and Colas, the youthful lovers of *La Fille Mal Gardée,* are etched in with a sure hand, and once again given conventional choreography that apparently could not be bettered for its appositeness. It might be said that this appositeness is Ashton's principal asset in defining character. He looks around the classroom, considers the standard classical vocabulary, and then, with almost unerring accuracy, selects the *mot juste.* Nevertheless Ashton does not hesitate to invent, or more often amend, movements where he thinks it necessary. Like Massine, he is a past master at suggesting character by a walk; the preda-

tory prowl of Lykanion in *Daphnis and Chloë,* the W. C. Fields' strut of Thomas in *La Fille Mal Gardée,* or the demon lover in *Tiresias,* moving like an arrogant ballroom spiv, gracefully clumsy, inordinately pleased with himself and his masculinity.

Earlier I touched on Ashton's elimination of separate mime passages, and his fusion of mime and dancing in a form of expressive dance. A vital part of this expressiveness is in his use of dance images, which is far more conscious, and also far more effective, than in the work of his nineteenth-century predecessors. It would here be possible to pile example upon example, but a few will have to suffice. In *Daphnis and Chloë,* for the scene in which Lykanion attempts to seduce the shepherd boy, Daphnis, it would be difficult to imagine a more appropriate image of physical abandon than her threshings in Daphnis's arms, as she performs a series of supported pirouettes coupled with ronds de jambes. Again in *Rinaldo and Armida* Ashton describes the mounting passion of the lovers by the simple device of three lifts spaced throughout the work; in the first Armida jumps at Rinaldo and sinks to the ground; in the second she clings to his neck; in the third, at the climax of their love, she rises high on his shoulder. Equally effective is the opening of Ashton's second version of *La Péri,* where Iskender is shown with the utmost simplicity groping his way through the world in his search for immortality.

Just as in his characterizations, in nearly all of his dance images, Ashton tends very much to make use of the materials to hand, namely the ordinary steps of the academic dance. His fidelity to classicism is always remarkable. Even in *Madame Chrysanthème* and *La Péri* he contrives to suggest Oriental atmosphere, often by little more than a slight but telling adaptation of the classic dance vocabulary. In *Madame Chrysanthème,* a delicious piece of *japonaiserie,* Ashton puts the girls up on to their full pointes, but their trembling pas de bourrées simulate the restricted shuffling of Japanese women, and while he uses such mannerisms of Japanese dancing as the foot being held at right angles to the leg, these are all incorporated into basically classical dances. Sometimes Ashton will use a conventional ballet enchaînement that takes its dramatic significance from its context; for example in *Illuminations* there is a grand

adagio for Sacred Love and four cavaliers that bears a strong family likeness to a similar dance in *Scènes de Ballet,* but in the Rimbaud ballet it stands as a dramatic symbol of the perfect love which the Poet is unable to share. Normally Ashton is no more likely to invent a new step than a writer is likely to invent a new word, and although he occasionally permits himself a coinage (Daphnis's foot-twiddles in *Daphnis and Chloë,* for example, where the dancer performs a sort of entrechat where the feet move to and fro but do not cross), these are rare.

Beryl Grey and Alexander Grant, center, with Rosemary Lindsay, Philip Chatfield, Bryan Ashbridge, and Svetlana Beriosova in *Homage to the Queen* (Houston Rogers)

For all the conventionality of his means, Ashton uses classical choreography in a very personal way. There is an ecstatic humanity found in his pas de deux, which is sometimes emphasized by a simple gesture, such as that in *Ondine,* when the water-sprite at the end of her love duet with Palemon tenderly caresses his hair. Through all his choreography runs this same sense of human feeling, which even breaks out in the strictly neo-classical *Scènes de Ballet,* where its triumphant peroration is full of human love and aspiration, or in the

elaborate rococo work of his presentation gala piece, *Homage to the Queen,* with its gravely reverent love duet. Even at his most brilliant (say, in the exhibition pas de deux for the two lovers in *La Fille Mal Gardée,* where Colas urges Lise on with snapping fingers, or again in the widely characterized solos of *Birthday Offering*), Ashton is never coldly spectacular. The stress he places on human feelings in his classical choreography gives it a tenderness and warmth, even a gentleness, that is, I think, characteristic only of Ashton.

Alexander Grant, Rowena Jackson, Elaine Fifield, and Nadia Nerina in *Variations on a Theme of Purcell* (Houston Rogers)

Ashton is one of the great stylists in ballet, but in discussing his particular style one comes up against an immediate difficulty. Each of his ballets is, to a greater or lesser degree of success, conceived in a style of its own, yet beneath this there lies the basic Ashton style which all his works have in common. Ashton's ballets are like members of the same family; each one is different, although they all bear a recognizable family likeness. He takes great pains over what I might call the surface style of his ballets. Like Fokine and Massine he is a great believer in "museum study," and *The Wise Virgins,* for instance,

derived in part from a study of Renaissance paintings, while many of the actual movements in *Daphnis and Chloë* came from the illustrations in Maurice Emmanuel's book *The Antique Greek Dance,* and parts of *Dante Sonata* took their inspiration from Gustav Doré and John Flaxman. It is this perhaps that has imposed such a remarkably homogenous style on the works in question.

Perhaps the touchstone of choreography is its emotional expressiveness, and in all of Ashton's work his dances are particularly sensitive to overtones of feeling. The adolescent yearnings of *Valses Nobles et Sentimentales,* which shows, or rather hints at, the criss-cross of human relationships caught at the distilled abstraction of some strange ball, are revealed through the style of the actual choreography, with its languid arm movements contrasted with its impetuous entries. Even in such a slight work as *Les Patineurs,* Ashton, while partly concerned with the technical task of simulating ice-skating with ballet dancers, never fails to make the actual dancing emotionally expressive, and is constantly alive to the ballet's atmosphere. The perky choreography of the Blue Boy's solo, full of over-exuberant swank, the gracefully Victorian love of the White Skaters (he is all gallantry; she, all swoons) and the way in which all the dancing manages with its briskness to suggest the crispness of a winter morning, helps to give *Les Patineurs* a quality deeper than the thin ice of its surface charms, enabling it to bear the weight of any number of repetitions. This vigilance towards style and atmosphere is fundamentally a matter of craftsmanship, and naturally it is something which Ashton shares with all good choreographers. Even so it seems pertinent to insist that Ashton is an unusually fine craftsman, a quality that may perhaps be dissociated from his artistry. Thus while many choreographers can impose a generally coherent basic movement style upon a ballet, Ashton carries this quality to extreme lengths.

Sometimes he will slightly modify his whole mode of choreographic expression for an individual ballet. The glaringly obvious example of this is to be found in the plastic style he uses for *Dante Sonata.* More moderate, and more typical, is his procedure in *Ondine,* where for much of the ballet he adopts

a peculiarly flowing type of choreography (based, he once claimed, on the movement of water), which gives the whole work a highly individual flavor. *Birthday Offering* he carried out in a style that suggested throughout, or perhaps "evoked" would be the better word, the Maryinsky ballet at the turn of the century, giving the work a sense of the Glazunov period, just as in *Sylvia* he has, particularly in his groupings, caught something of the Second Empire ballet prints, without sacrificing the contemporary tone of his choreography.

In giving individuality to a ballet, Ashton uses a number of varying devices. Sometimes this is as simple as sustaining a particular mood, so that *La Fille Mal Gardée* takes much of its flavor from a consistent suggestion of the countryside with its rustic simplicity and humors. But before discussing atmosphere in Ashton ballets, mention might be made of another of his favorite tricks that can be seen in *La Fille Mal Gardée*—the use of *leitmotiv.* Here he utilizes tap dancing (admittedly in some rather unusual guises) and various kinds of ribbon dances to give the choreography a sense of continuity. *Leitmotiv* also appears in *Cinderella,* where for example, soubresaut retirés first appear in the Fairy Spring variation, are later taken up by all the Seasons, and then are finally given in the second act by the Prince's friends.

"Atmosphere" is one of those jargon words so useful to hard-pressed journalists, because in ballet criticism it implies more than it means. It is always difficult to define precisely what is meant by atmosphere in a ballet, but perhaps one could call it the sustained suggestion or evocation of a particular mood, a particular period and place, or even a particular cultural background. The keywords are "sustained" and "particular." Personally I have never been able to understand why some ballets (and not always good ballets at that) should have this quality of atmosphere, while others have not, and I imagine that this is one of those mysteries that audiences and critics very rarely do unravel. Obviously atmosphere comes from a whole complex of sources, some combination of all the various constituents that go to make up a ballet, and however difficult it is to define, it is remarkably easy to recognize, or at least sense.

Gerd Larsen and Alfred Rodrigues, background; Michael Somes, center; Pauline Clayden and Brian Shaw, foreground, in Scene III of *Tiresias* (Roger Wood)

Ashton has the gift of evoking atmosphere to a pronounced extent. Sometimes, as in the examples of *The Wise Virgins* and *Dante Sonata* quoted above, this is achieved by allowing his choreography to be consciously influenced by painting, but frequently the method (and the result) is more involved and subtle. When he wants to give a ballet a literary flavor, Ashton has the remarkable facility for imbueing a whole work with just the right atmosphere. Comparatively few of his ballets fall into this literary category, and even when they do his approach and method vary considerably.

In *Illuminations,* his task was to suggest the burning symbolism of Rimbaud, and he achieved this with a series of short, descriptive charades (each evocative of a poem) through which the Poet himself wandered almost as a connecting link. These brief episodes—short, sharp flashes of insight, seen with the inner eye—have the fantastic artificiality of a dream, and the twisted beauty of Rimbaud was allowed to emerge through a formalized structure. Here Ashton is catching the author's spirit

Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes in *Sylvia,* Act III (Felix Fonteyn)

by giving a choreographic impression, perhaps even impersonation, of the author's style. In *Madame Chrysanthème* Ashton was basing his ballet on a novel by Pierre Loti, and on this occasion he evoked the literary original by adopting the author's approach to his subject, so that just as the novel is a delicately sensitive picture of Japan seen through European eyes, so Ashton's choreography aimed at the same effect.

In these two instances Ashton's intention (*inter alia*) appears to have been to allude to specific literary styles, but on other occasions he has created ballets that are instinct with a whole period, or if you prefer, a cultural climate. *Le Rêve de Léonor* was a deplorable ballet (one of his few total losses), yet it did succeed in suggesting the thwarted, out-moded ethos of surrealism far more cogently than did Massine in his equally deplorable *Mad Tristan.* In the same way, without comparing in detail the actual ballets, I feel that Ashton's *Apparitions* was also more successful than Massine's *Symphonie Fantastique* in its approach to its Romantic background. The shades of Walpole

and Beckford haunting the elaborate fancies of Strawberry Hill and Fonthill, are never far from Ashton's scene. The Byronic, drug-taking Poet represents a somewhat later stage in the Romantic agony than the trappings of the rest of the ballet (he and his *femme fatale* alone are pure Berlioz), but the orgy in the cavern, clearly inspired by the activities of Sir Francis Dashwood's Hell-fire Club, like the funeral cortège deriving from Lewis's novel *The Monk,* helped to give *Apparitions* an exciting authenticity and a curiously pungent historical flavor.

Having now stressed the diversity found in Ashton's ballets I am left with the more difficult job of describing their kinship one to another, for underneath all their differences there runs his individual and quite unmistakable basic, choreographic style. What is the fundamental nature of Ashton's choreography? Two words suggest themselves to me—"fluent" and "lyrical." Fluency is an immediate characteristic of Ashton's work. The steps have a flow, and enchaînement after enchaînement pours out with an unforced originality. Smooth and effortless, the best of his choreography has a compulsive air of inevitability about it, almost as if it has not been created but only discovered. It has a wonderful sense of ease and freedom. Yet although it is undoubtedly fluent, I think I prefer the word "lyrical" to describe its essential nature. This word carrying its suggestions of song, poetry, and spontaneity, seems to me to sum up very neatly the feel of Ashton's choreography.

Another characteristic quality of Ashton's work is musicality. The question of a choreographer's musicality is a factual thing that does not permit a factual answer. The nearest we can get is to apply the somewhat lame rule that choreography is musical which does not jar with the music, a yardstick that everyone can quote but no one can demonstrate. The matter is also complicated by musicality's having two distinct parts, in the choreographer's approach to the score's structure and also to its spirit. Then again disagreement can arise even on the purely technical aspect of the physical relationship between dance and music. Should the choreography seek to mirror the music (perhaps even to the extent where Miss X is dancing the first subject and Miss Y the second) or should it run over the music like the vocal line in an opera? How far should dancing seek

to echo orchestral color and texture—could an arabesque be, say, E flat, or a fouetté represent a trombone? Can a crescendo be matched by increasing the number of dancers, so that each member of the corps de ballet has, as it were, a decibel factor? I raise these possibly frivolous questions because it seems to me that too many people describe a choreographer as musical without describing what they regard as musicality. Although I have seen a great deal of musical choreography, for various reasons the only twentieth-century choreographers I would actually describe as instinctively musical are Fokine, Graham, Balanchine, Lavrovsky, Tudor, Robbins and Ashton.

Ashton does not tie himself to the quivering quaver, and to my mind no really musical choreographer does adopt this minimal approach. He uses the music's rhythm as a sheet anchor for his choreographic variations, a point of departure and a point of return. He has a very sensitive feel for the shape of the music—for example at one point in *Daphnis and Chloë,* the ballerina is supported by her partner who turns slowly in time with the music; as the music increases in tempo his turns get faster and Chloë floats upwards into the air, this upward movement seeming to parallel the increasing volume of the orchestra, so that Daphnis is suggesting the quickening rhythmic climax, while Chloë suggests the slow crescendo of sound. This instinctive musicality—such an effect is unlikely to have been consciously planned—shows itself time and again in Ashton's work. In the apotheosis to *Scènes de Ballet,* where Stravinsky's massive harmonies rise up and up to an infinite grandeur, Ashton produces a magnificent peroration with a series of huge lifts across the stage, one girl after another swooping over, carried in a monumentalized grand jeté, as the brass pounds out its statement. In the male variation devised for Idzikowski in *Les Rendezvous,* the dancer has to open out with a series of pas ciseux set so that the accent of the musical phrase comes on the apex of the jump. In *Symphonic Variations* the relationship between male and female dancing on the one hand, and orchestra and piano on the other, is amazingly complex and satisfying, and his use of *concertante* movement here has a marvellous spontaneity.

Ashton's regard for the spirit of the music as well as its

letter is remarkable, and can perhaps be instanced by the different coloring he places on Maurice Ravel's superficially similar *Valses Nobles et Sentimentales* (the apotheosis of Franz Schubert) and *La Valse* (the apotheosis of Johann Strauss). *La Valse* is a particularly interesting example, because here he claims to have tried "to keep as closely as possible to the idea which Ravel himself outlined so clearly." Unfortunately the "idea outlined so clearly" on the score was not the complete story, for during the course of the music's composition Ravel, without changing his program note, linked it in his mind with "the fantastic whirl of destiny." Ashton, it seems, to judge by what he said at the time, choreographed *La Valse* as nothing more than a vast concert waltz, and deliberately turned aside from any "dancing on the edge of a volcano." But fortunately the score governed him, and despite his intentions the music took over, and Ravel's "whirl of destiny" was manifested through almost every bar of the choreography.

Musicality apart, there are certain physical quirks to Ashton's choreography (his admirers call them "his style," his opponents call them "his mannerisms") that would probably make it instantly recognizable. He possibly produces his most typical choreography in pas de deux—the dance form in which he has done his best work. Apart from the mood which his pas de deux almost invariably evoke (rapt and intimate) they also tend to bear certain choreographic trademarks in common. There is "air-walking," where the girl is carried by the man, usually at his side, while her pointed feet describe what might almost be called supported jetés just above the ground, which they never touch. Less noticeable but no less significant characteristics are the girl circling round the man, or the man lifting the girl up and placing her to one side of him. The formal or semi-formal pas de deux is the crown of Ashton's invention, but his whole choreography reveals a considerable emphasis on double-work, some of it occasionally allegro and very frequently making use of highly ingenious lifts. It is for his double-work that he usually reserves his choreographic coinages, and the rest of his style tends to aim at a clean-cut simplicity. Naturally he has his favorite steps, so that chainé turns are fairly common in his work, fouettés are very rare, while unsupported

pirouettes are not often used. There is a conscious and loving emphasis on all sorts of arabesques. His female choreography shows a marked tendency to be far more classical and quite often more spectacular than his arrangements for male dancers.

It is typical of the neo-classical choreographers for great importance to be placed on floor patterns, and Ashton is no exception in this regard. He appears to be particularly anxious to avoid the two-dimensional, frieze effect sometimes to be found

Members of the Royal Ballet in *La Valse* (Houston Rogers)

in expressionist choreography, and it may be that it is his effort to combat this (even when his ballets are seen front-on from the stalls) that prompts him to make great use of diagonal patterns, semi-circles, and indeed any arrangement that will open up the depth of the stage for an audience placed at stage-level. For all this his ballets are best seen from above. In many ways the best position to view Ashton and Balanchine at Covent Garden is from the gallery right at the top of the house—this

partly explains the situation found when the New York City Ballet visited London in 1950 and 1952 when the stalls (including the stall-borne critics) remained fairly detached, while the gallery went almost berserk with enthusiasm.

The last element in Ashton's basic style can possibly be best summed up under the word "ritual." Perhaps it was the influence of his early days in Peru when he came under the spell of Catholic ceremonials, perhaps more simply it is merely an orderly Englishness in his temperament, but for whatever reason Ashton loves the ritualistic aspect of ballet. Not all, but many of his works include ritualistic movement with processions of dancers, stylized gestures and the slow unfolding of movement. Not only is this taste one of the factors that have placed him among Petipa's heirs (the framework of the nineteenth-century grand manner, with its discreetly gorgeous formalities rounded off by an apotheosis, being much to his taste) but it also leads to the most common flaw in his architectonics. Sometimes his corps de ballet dances are altogether too symmetrical, a quality which at its worst (notably in *Tiresias*) can make his choreography seem cold and dull. As a by-product of these occasional bouts of awful symmetry, there is his tendency to demand too difficult a degree of synchronization from his dancers. The sequential cadences in *Scènes de Ballet* are rarely correctly performed, while the amount of togetherness he expected from the cast in *Variations on a Theme of Purcell* has never been forthcoming.

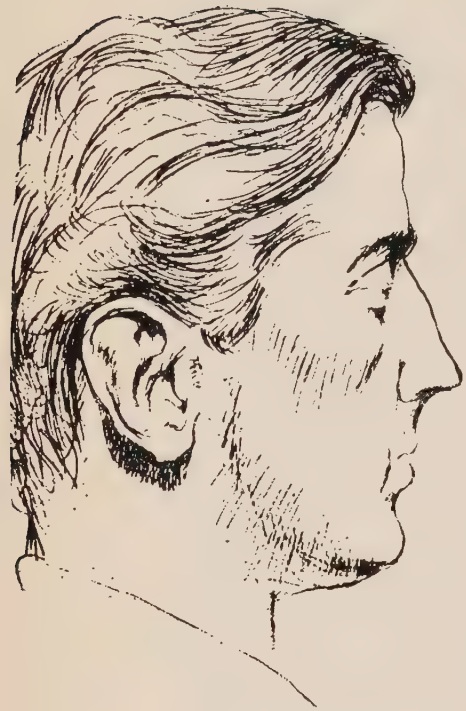
There is still one important aspect of Ashton's work that so far I have only hinted at. There is about all his ballets a very determined and deliberate lack of emphasis. He appears to care comparatively little for immediate impact, and even his most bravura choreography is aimed at the lustre of pearls rather than the brilliance of diamonds. It is largely for this reason that Ashton's ballets are notoriously difficult to assess at one seeing. They usually grow on their audience, and often show more of their qualities at each repeated seeing. As at a first sight his ballets occasionally are bewilderingly difficult to catch hold of, they are almost always far more popular with the regular ballet audience than with the casual visitors, and this lack of total immediate appeal has, I think, accounted in

the past for more than a few critical cold-shoulders.

Ashton can be said to have contributed everything and nothing to the growth and development of British ballet. Although with *A Tragedy of Fashion* he created what is universally recognized as British ballet's inaugural work, and ever since has been its most prolific and consistently successful creative artist, the idea of his having anything positive to do with its ever-growing organization and administration is almost unthinkable. Where he would have been without Marie Rambert and Ninette de Valois is an interesting but unfruitful conjecture, yet he can justly be considered as the principal designer of the structure they eventually built.

His influence runs throughout every performance of the Royal Ballet, and even to a lesser extent through the other branch of the national ballet, the Ballet Rambert. The whole way the British dance owes an incalculable amount to Ashton's taste, and it is their distinctive way of performing the nineteenth-century classics to dance them as if they were performing a ballet by Ashton. Also as he has now been the dominating creative force in British ballet for about thirty years, his influence on his younger contemporaries has been very considerable. Even when they have reacted strongly against his personal choreographic style, many of them still show a disconcerting habit of suddenly slipping into Ashton's idiom, or unwittingly betraying an Ashton influence.

The first significant British ballet critic, J. E. Crawford Flitch, writing in 1912, said with prophetic wisdom: "Probably the real reason why England has failed to produce a great school of ballet is principally owing to the absence of a *maître de ballet* of genius." It is, I think, Ashton's presence more than anything else that has now made possible the "great school of ballet" for which Crawford Flitch hankered.



CHECK LIST OF WORKS BY FREDERICK ASHTON

ABBREVIATIONS

sc—scenario; mus—music; arr—arranged; orch—orchestrated; dec—décor; cos—costumes; chor—choreography; prod—production; nprod—new production; prem—premiere.

CamTh—Cambridge Theatre; CovG—Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; LyrTh—Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith; MerTh—Mercury Theatre; SWTh—Sadler's Wells Theatre; SavTh—Savoy Theatre. The city is always London unless otherwise specified.

BClub—Ballet Club; BRamb—Ballet Rambert; CamSoc—Camargo Society; MRambD—Marie Rambert Dancers; RoyB—Royal Ballet; SadWB—Sadler's Wells Ballet; SadWTB—Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet; Vic-WB—Vic-Wells Ballet.

A TRAGEDY OF FASHION, or The Scarlet Scissors

Sc Ashley Dukes; *mus* Eugene Goossens ("Kaleidoscope,") *arr* Ernest Irving; *dec & cos* Sophie Fedorovitch.
PREM. June 15, 1926, LyrTh (as an item in the revue "Riverside Nights" by A. P. Herbert and Nigel Playfair).
CAST. Monsieur Duchic (le grand Couturier)/Frederick Ashton; Orchidée (his partner)/Marie Rambert; Model "Rose d'Isphahan"/Frances James; Model "Désire du Cygne"/Elizabeth Vincent; Viscountess Viscosa/Esme Biddle; Viscount Viscosa, O.B.E./Earle Grey.

Dances from LES PETITS RIENS

Mus Wolfgang A. Mozart; *dec & cos* William Chappell.
PREM. June, 1928. First complete performance at a private viewing. Excerpts called "Nymphs and Shepherds" given: March 10, 1928, Century Theatre. MRambD.
CAST. Andrée Howard, Harold Turner, Marie Rambert, Frederick Ashton.

LEDA AND THE SWAN

Mus Christoph W. Gluck ("Orfeo"); *cos* after Sandro Botticelli.
PREM. July 10, 1928, Apollo Theatre (at a charity matinee). MRambD.
CAST. Leda/Diana Gould; Zeus (Swan)/Frederick Ashton; Ganimede/William Chappell; Hermes/Harold Turner; Naides/Pearl Argyle, Andrée Howard, Kathleen O'Connor, Irene Kinsey, Joyce Peters, Prudence Hyman.

NPROD (revised). Feb. 25, 1930, LyrTh. MRambD. *Cos* William Chappell; *swan cos* Bruce Winston.
CAST. Leda/Gould; Swan/Ashton; Nymphs/Argyle, Louise Barton, Hyman, Kinsey, Elisabeth Schooling, Kathleen Suthers; Zephyrs/Turner, Chappell.

MARS AND VENUS

Mus Domenico Scarlatti; *dec* Aubrey Hammond; *cos* Herbert Norris.
PREM. July 29, 1929, Opera House, Blackpool (ballet given in the course of the play "Jew Süss" by Ashley Dukes based upon passages in the historical romance of Lion Feuchtwanger).
CAST. Venus/Pearl Argyle; Her Nymphs/Louise Barton,[1] Anna Brunton; Mars/Harold Turner.

NPROD (enlarged). Feb. 25, 1930, LyrTh. MRambD.
CAST. Venus/Argyle; Mars/William Chappell; Nymphs/Barton, Prudence Hyman.

NPROD. April 26, 1931, CamTh. CamSoc.
With costumes by William Chappell and music scored for full eighteenth-century orchestra by Constant Lambert.

CAPRIOL SUITE

Mus Peter Warlock; *dec & cos* William Chappell.
PREM. Feb. 25, 1930, LyrTh. MRambD.
CAST. Pearl Argyle, Prudence Hyman, William Chappell, Robert Stuart, Diana Gould, Frederick Ashton, Harold Turner, Louise Barton.

NPROD. Feb. 25, 1931, Apollo Theatre. CamSoc. Given in tribute to the memory of the composer.
CAST. As above.

NPROD. Oct. 5, 1948, SWTh. SadWTB.
CAST. Maureen Bruce, Stella Farrance, Michael Boulton, Pirmin Trecu, Jane Shore, David Poole, Hans Zullig, Patricia Miller, Stella Claire, David Blair, David Gill.

SAUDADE DO BRESIL

Mus Darius Milhaud.
PREM. June 23, 1930, LyrTh. MRambD. In an item titled "Short Sketches."
CAST. Frederick Ashton.

MAZURKA DES HUSSARS

Mus Alexander Borodin.
PREM. July 3, 1930, LyrTh. MRambD. In an item titled "Divertissements."
CAST. Marie Rambert, Frederick Ashton.

MARRIAGE A LA MODE

Play John Dryden; *mus* traditional airs; *prod* Nigel Playfair.
PREM. Oct. 9, 1930, LyrTh. MRambD.
DANCE CAST. Alicia Markova, Frederick Ashton, Marie Nielson, Anna Brunton, Hedley Briggs, Walter Gore.

POMONA

Theme Thomas McGreevy; *mus* Constant Lambert; *dec & cos* John Banting.[2]
PREM. Oct. 19, 1930, CamTh. CamSoc.
CAST. Vertumnus/Anton Dolin; Pomona/Anna Ludmilla; with Walter Gore, Jack Spurgeon, Doris Sonne, Marie Nielson, Wendy Toye, Joy Newton, Beatrice Appleyard, Iris James, Anna Brunton, Elisabeth Schooling, Philip McNair.

NPROD. Jan. 17, 1933, SWTh. Vic-WB. With décor by Vanessa Bell.
CAST. Vertumnus/Dolin; Pomona/Appleyard; with corps.

NPROD. Sept. 28, 1937, SWTh. Vic-WB. With décor and costumes by Banting.
CAST. Vertumnus/Robert Helpmann; Pomona/Pearl Argyle; with corps.

DANCES ON A SCOTCH THEME (THE TARTANS)[3]

Mus William Boyce, *arr* Constant Lambert; *cos* William Chappell.
PREM. Dec. 10, 1930, Arts Theatre. In a program of poetry, music, and dance given by Lydia Lopokova and others.
CAST. Lassie/Lydia Lopokova; Her Lads/Harold Turner, Frederick Ashton.

NPROD. Dec. 31, 1931, MerTh. BClub.
CAST. Lassie/Alicia Markova; Her Lads/Turner, Ashton.

FOLLOW YOUR SAINT (THE PASSIONATE PAVANE)

Mus John Dowland ("Lachrymae,") *transcribed* Peter Warlock; *cos* William Chappell.
PREM. Dec. 10, 1930, Arts Theatre (see above).
CAST. Lady/Lydia Lopkova; Suitors/Frederick Ashton, Harold Turner.

NPROD. April 26, 1931, CamTh. CamSoc.
CAST. Lady/Lopokova; Suitors/Ashton, William Chappell.

A FLORENTINE PICTURE

Mus Arcangelo Corelli (Violin Sonata, Op. 5, No. 12, "La Folia"); *cos after* Sandro Botticelli.
PREM. Dec. 20, 1930, LyrTh. MRambD.
CAST. Madonna/Marie Rambert; Angels/Diana Gould, Pearl Argyle, Andrée Howard, Prudence Hyman, Elisabeth Schooling, Maude Lloyd.

FACADE[4]

Mus William Walton; *dec & cos* John Armstrong.
PREM. April 26, 1931, CamTh. CamSoc.
CAST. Scotch Rhapsody/Prudence Hyman, Maude Lloyd, Antony Tudor; Jodelling Song/Lydia Lopokova, Frederick Ashton, William Chappell, Walter Gore; Polka/Alicia Markova; Waltz/Pearl Argyle, Diana Gould, Lloyd, Hyman; Popular Song/Chappell, Gore; Tango Pasadoble/Lopokova, Ashton.

NPROD. May 4, 1931, MerTh. BClub.
CAST. Milkmaid/Andrée Howard; Polka/Markova; Popular Song/Chappell, Gore; Debutante/Markova; Dago/Ashton.

NPROD. Oct. 8, 1935, SWTh. Vic-WB.
CAST. Milkmaid/Gwyneth Mathews; Polka/Margot Fonteyn; Popular Song/Chappell, Harold Turner; Debutante/Molly Brown; Dago/Ashton; Country Dance/Argyle, Richard Ellis, Robert Helpmann.

NPROD. July 23, 1940, SWTh. Vic-WB. With new décor by John Armstrong.
CAST. Noche Espagnole/Ashton; Milkmaid/Julia Farron; Polka/Fonteyn; Popular Song/Ellis, John Hart; Debutante/Fonteyn; Dago/Ashton; Country Dance/Mary Honer, Michael Somes, Helpmann; Foxtrot/June Brae, Pamela May, Helpmann, Ashton.

NPROD. April 29, 1946, SWTh. SadWTB.
CAST. Milkmaid/Sheila Nelson; Polka/Anne Heaton; Popular Song/Donald Britton, Alexander Grant; Debutante/Brae; Dago/Ashton.

REGATTA

Mus Gavin Gordon; *dec & cos* William Chappell.
PREM. Sept. 22, 1931, Old Vic Theatre. Vic-WB.
CAST. Cabin Boy/Stanley Judson, Three Yachting Girls/Freda Bamford, Sheila McCarthy, Joy Newton; Two Young Men/Walter Gore, William Chappell; Foreign Visitor/Ninette de Valois.

NPROD. June 13, 1932, SavTh. CamSoc.
CAST. Cabin Boy/Hedley Briggs; Yachting Girls/Bamford, McCarthy, Newton; Sailors/Gore, Chappell; Foreign Visitor/de Valois.

THE LORD OF BURLEIGH

Sc Edwin Evans; *mus* Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, *selected* Edwin Evans, *orch* Gordon Jacob; *dec & cos* George Sheringham.
PREM. Dec. 15, 1931, Carlton Theatre, Haymarket. At a charity performance. Feb. 28, 1932, SavTh. CamSoc.
CAST. Katie Willows/Alicia Markova; Lady Clara Vere de Vere/Diana Gould;

Lilian/Andrée Howard; Mariana/Maude Lloyd; Madeline/Prudence Hyman; Adeline/Pearl Argyle; Isabel/Phyllis Stanley; Rosalind/Betty Cuff; Margaret/Elisabeth Schooling; Eleanore/Natalia Gregorova; Lord of Burleigh/William Chappell; Eustace/Walter Gore; Edwin Morris/Rollo Gamble;[5] Edward Gray/Antony Tudor.

NPROD. Oct. 17, 1932, Old Vic Theatre. Vic-WB.
CAST. Katie Willows/Markova; Lady Clara Vere de Vere/Ursula Moreton; Lilian/Sheila McCarthy; Mariana/Beatrice Appleyard; Adeline/Marie Neilson; Madeline/Nadina Newhouse; Rosalind/Ailne Phillips; Margaret/Freda Bamford; Isabel/Joy Newton; Eleanor/Gwyneth Mathews; Lord of Burleigh/Anton Dolin; Edward Gray/Travis Kemp; Edwin Morris/Tudor; Eustace/Claude Newman.

MERCURY

Mus Erik Satie; *dec & cos* William Chappell.
PREM. June 22, 1931, LyrTh. BRamb.
CAST. Venus[6]/Tamara Karsavina; Apollo/William Chappell; Mercury/Frederick Ashton; with corps.

NPROD. June 27, 1932, SavTh. CamSoc.
CAST. Terpsichore/Alicia Markova; Apollo/Chappell; The Graces/Maude Lloyd, Prudence Hyman, Elisabeth Schooling; Mercury/Walter Gore; Attendants/Andrée Howard, Betty Cuff, Susette Morfield.

LA PERI

Mus Paul Dukas; *dec & cos* William Chappell.
PREM. Feb. 16, 1931, MerTh. BClub.
CAST. La Péri/Alicia Markova; Iskender/Frederick Ashton; Companions/Pearl Argyle, Andrée Howard, Maude Lloyd, Elisabeth Schooling, Susette Morfield, Betty Cuff.

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

Mus Jean Sibelius (piano works); *dec & cos* William Chappell.
PREM. Nov. 12, 1931, MerTh. BClub.
CAST. Lady of Shalott/Pearl Argyle; Her Reflection/Maude Lloyd; Reapers/Prudence Hyman, Elisabeth Schooling, Betty Cuff, Suzette Morfield, William Chappell; Lovers/Andrée Howard, Walter Gore; Sir Lancelot/Frederick Ashton.

RIO GRANDE[7]

Mus Constant Lambert (a setting of a poem by Sacheverell Sitwell); *dec & cos* Edward Burra.
PREM. Nov. 29, 1931, SavTh. CamSoc.
CAST. Queen of the Port/Lydia Lopokova; Her Sailor/Walter Gore; A Creole Girl/Alicia Markova; A Creole Boy/William Chappell; with corps.

NPROD (slightly revised). March 26, 1936, SWTh. Vic-WB.
CAST. Queen of the Port/Beatrice Appleyard; Stevedore/Gore; Creole Girl/Margot Fonteyn; Creole Boy/Chappell; with corps.

RECAMIER

Mus Franz Schubert; *dec & cos* William Chappell.
PREM. April, 1932, Trocadero Restaurant (as "An 1805 Impression").[8] Dec. 31,

1933, MerTh. BClub.
CAST. Récamier/Pearl Argyle; Her Suitor/Frederick Ashton.

HIGH YELLOW

Mus Spike Hughes; *dec* Vanessa Bell; *cos* William Chappell; *chor* Buddy Bradley *with assistance of* Frederick Ashton.
PREM. June 6, 1932, SavTh. CamSoc.
CAST. Mammy/Ursula Moreton; Pappy/Hedley Briggs; Bambu, their son/Frederick Ashton; Mabel, Edna, Pansy, Ninon, his sisters/Sheila McCarthy, Freda Bamford, Betty Cuff, Nadina Newhouse; Violette and Cleo, his sweethearts/Alicia Markova, Doris Sonne.

FOYER DE DANSE

Mus Lord Berners ("Luna Park"); *cos after* Edgar Degas.
PREM. Oct. 9, 1932, MerTh. BClub.
CAST. L'Etoile/Alicia Markova; Maitre de Ballet/Frederick Ashton; Coryphées/Andrée Howard, Prudence Hyman, Betty Cuff, Elisabeth Schooling, Suzette Morfield, Elizabeth Ruxton; Un Abonné/Walter Gore.

LES MASQUES

Mus Francis Poulenc (Trio); *dec & cos* Sophie Fedorovitch.
PREM. March 5, 1933, MerTh. BClub.
CAST. A Personage/Frederick Ashton; His Lady Friend/Alicia Markova; His Wife/Pearl Argyle; Her Lover/Walter Gore; Two Young Girls/Elisabeth Schooling, Betty Cuff; Three Ladies with Fans/Anna Brunton, Elizabeth Ruxton, Tamara Svetlova.

PAVANE POUR UNE INFANTE DEFUNTE[9]

Mus Maurice Ravel; *dec & cos* Hugh Stevenson.
PREM. May 7, 1933, MerTh. BClub.
CAST. Diana Gould; William Chappell.

NPROD (revised). Oct. 29, 1933, MerTh. Cast as above.

LES RENDEZVOUS

Mus Daniel Auber; *dec & cos* William Chappell.
PREM. Dec. 5, 1933, SWTh. Vic-WB.
CAST. Alicia Markova, Stanislas Idzikowsky, Ninette de Valois, Stanley Judson, Robert Helpmann; with corps.

NPROD. Nov. 16, 1937, SWTh. Vic-WB. With new décor by Chappell.
CAST. Margot Fonteyn, Harold Turner, Jill Gregory, Frederick Ashton, Claude Newman.

NPROD. Dec. 26, 1947, SWTh. SadWTB. With new décor and costumes by Chappell.
CAST. Elaine Fifield, Michael Boulton, Sheilah O'Reilly, Donald Britton, Pirmin Trecu.

NPROD. Nov. 5, 1956, Palace Theatre, Hamilton, Ont. National Ballet of Canada. With décor and costumes by Kay Ambrose after the original designs.
CAST. Lois Smith, David Adams, Betty Pope, Glenn Gibson, Ray Moller.

NPROD. May 7, 1959, CovG. RoyB. With new costumes by Chappell and décor by Sophie Fedorovitch (Act I of Verdi's "La Traviata").
CAST. Nadia Nerina, Brian Shaw, Merle Park, Petrus Bosman, Graham Usher.

MEPHISTO VALSE

Mus Franz Liszt; *dec & cos* Sophie Fedorovitch.
PREM. June 13, 1934, MerTh. BClub.
CAST. Marguerite/Alicia Markova; Mephisto/Frederick Ashton; Faust/Walter Gore; Young Girls/Elisabeth Schooling, Doris Sonne, Peggy van Praagh; Young Men/Hugh Laing, Rollo Gamble, Frank Staff.

NPROD. March 15, 1953, Ballet Workshop. In tribute to the memory of Sophie Fedorovitch.
CAST. Marguerite/Paula Hinton; Mephisto/Michael Holmes; Faust/Robert Harrold; Young Girls/Marjorie Field, Yvonne Olena, Juliet Darnley; Young men/Norman McDowell, Ronald Yerrell, Ray Pointer.

VALENTINE'S EVE

Mus Maurice Ravel ("Valses Nobles et Sentimentales"); *dec & cos* Sophie Fedorovitch.
PREM. Feb. 4, 1935, Duke of York's Theatre. BRamb.
CAST. Constant/Frederick Ashton; Phryné/Pearl Argyle; Solange/Maude Lloyd; Sylvestre/William Chappell; Betté/Elisabeth Schooling; Robert/Walter Gore; Ninon/Peggy van Praagh; Octave/Hugh Laing; Francois/Frank Staff.

LE BAISER DE LA FEE

Mus Igor Stravinsky; *dec & cos* Sophie Fedorovitch.
PREM. Nov. 26, 1935, SWTh. Vic-WB.
CAST. A Mother/Ursula Moreton; The Fairy/Pearl Argyle; Young Man/Harold Turner; His Fiancée/Margot Fonteyn; with corps.

SIESTA

Mus William Walton; *cos for Pearl Argyle* Matilda Etches.
PREM. Jan. 24, 1936, SWTh. Vic-WB.
CAST. Pearl Argyle, Robert Helpmann.

APPARITIONS

Mus Franz Liszt, *arr* Constant Lambert, *orch* Gordon Jacob; *dec & cos* Cecil Beaton.
PREM. Feb. 11, 1936, SWTh. Vic-WB.
CAST. Poet/Robert Helpmann; Woman in a Ball Dress/Margot Fonteyn; Hussar/Harold Turner; Monk/Maurice Brooke; with corps.

NOCTURNE

Theme Edward Sackville-West; *mus* Frederick Delius ("Paris"); *dec & cos* Sophie Fedorovitch.
PREM. Nov. 10, 1936,[10] SWTh. Vic-WB.
CAST. A Spectator/Frederick Ashton; A Young Man/Robert Helpmann; A Rich Girl/June Brae; A Poor Girl[11]/Margot Fonteyn; with corps.

LES PATINEURS

Mus Giacomo Meyerbeer, *arr* Constant Lambert; *dec & cos* William Chappell.
PREM. Feb. 16, 1937, SWTh. Vic-WB.
CAST. Harold Turner, Mary Honer, Elizabeth Miller, Margot Fonteyn, Robert Helpmann, June Brae, Pamela May; with corps.

NPROD. Oct. 2, 1946, Broadway Theatre, New York. Ballet Theatre. With décor and costumes by Cecil Beaton.
CAST. John Kriza, Barbara Fallis, Cynthia Riseley, Hugh Laing, Nora Kaye, Diana Adams, Anna Cheselka.

A WEDDING BOUQUET

Words Gertrude Stein; *mus* Lord Berners; *dec & cos* Lord Berners, *executed under supervision of* William Chappell.
PREM. April 27, 1937, SWTh. Vic-WB.
CAST. Webster/Ninette de Valois; Two Peasant Girls/Linda Sheridan, Joan Leaman; Two Peasant Boys/Paul Reymond, Alan Carter; Josephine/June Brae; Paul/Harold Turner; John/William Chappell; Violet/Pamela May; Ernest/Claude Newman; Thérèse/Elizabeth Miller; Julia/Margot Fonteyn; Bridegroom/Robert Helpmann; Pépé (Julia's dog)/Julia Farron; Arthur/Leslie Edwards; Guy/Michael Somes; Four Guests/Gwyneth Mathews, Wendy Horsburgh, Joy Newton, Anne Spicer; Two Gendarmes/Paul Reymond, Alan Carter; Bride/Mary Honer; Bridesmaids/Molly Brown, Jill Gregory.

HOROSCOPE

Mus Constant Lambert; *dec & cos* Sophie Fedorovitch.
PREM. Jan. 27, 1938, SWTh. Vic-WB.
CAST. Young Man/Michael Somes; Young Woman/Margot Fonteyn; The Gemini/Richard Ellis, Alan Carter; The Moon/Pamela May; with corps.

JUDGMENT OF PARIS

Mus Lennox Berkeley; *dec & cos* William Chappell.
PREM. May 10, 1938, SWTh. Vic-WB.
CAST. Paris/Robert Helpmann; Venus/Pearl Argyle; Juno/Elizabeth Miller; Minerva/Mary Honer; Mercury/William Chappell.

HARLEQUIN IN THE STREET[12]

Mus Francois Couperin, *orch* Gordon Jacob; *dec & cos* André Derain.
PREM. Nov. 10, 1938, SWTh. Vic-WB.
CAST. La Superbe/June Brae; Monseigneur/Michael Somes; Harlequin/Alan Carter; Porters/Stanley Hall, John Hart; Commères/Palma Nye, Jill Gregory, Patricia Garnett; Bird-Catcher/Richard Ellis; Bread Boy/Frank Staff; Letter Bearer/John Nicholson.

CUPID AND PSYCHE

Mus Lord Berners; *dec & cos* Sir Francis Rose.
PREM. April 27, 1939, SWTh. Vic-WB.
CAST. Tanagra Women/Margaret Williams, Stella Villiers-Stuart, Valerie Wade, Moyra Fraser; Pan/Michael Somes; Nymphs/Palma Nye, Joan Leaman; Psyche/

Julia Farron; Cupid/Frank Staff; Venus/June Brae; Psyche's Sisters/Mary Honer, Elizabeth Miller; Ceres/Margot Fonteyn;[13] Minerva/Mary Honer; Diana/Elizabeth Miller; Apollo/Richard Ellis; Juno/Ursula Moreton; Jupiter/David Grey; Attendants on Juno and Jupiter/William Chappell, Claude Newman; with corps.

DEVIL'S HOLIDAY

Mus Vincenzo Tommasini *on themes of* Niccolo Paganini; *dec & cos* Eugene Berman.
PREM. Oct. 26, 1939, Metropolitan Opera House, New York. Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo.
CAST. Old Lord/Simon Semenoff; His Daughter/Alexandra Danilova; Young Lover/Frederic Franklin; Fiancé/George Zoritch; The Devil/Marc Platoff; Gypsy Girl/Nathalie Krassovska; Old Woman/Tatiana Chamie; Beggar/Robert Irwin; Hat-Seller/Alexander Goudovitch; with corps.

DANTE SONATA

Mus Franz Liszt, *orch* Constant Lambert; *dec & cos* Sophie Fedorovitch, *after* John Flaxman.
PREM. Jan. 23, 1940, SWTh. Vic-WB.
CAST. Children of Light/Margot Fonteyn, Pamela May, Julia Farron, Anne Spicer, Olive Deacon, Joan Phillips, Joan Leaman, Jean Bedells, Michael Somes, Richard Ellis, Leslie Edwards, Leo Young; Children of Darkness/June Brae, Joy Newton, Patricia Garnett, Palma Nye, Guinevere Parry, Mavis Jackson, Annabel Farjeon, Joan Ross, Robert Helpmann, Alan Carter, John Hart, Stanley Hall.

THE WISE VIRGINS

Mus Johann S. Bach, *orch* William Walton; *dec & cos* Rex Whistler.
PREM. April 24, 1940, SWTh. Vic-WB.
CAST. Bridegroom/Michael Somes; Bride/Margot Fonteyn; Father/Claude Newman; Mother/Annabel Farjeon; with corps.

THE WANDERER

Mus Franz Schubert; *dec & cos* Graham Sutherland.
PREM. Jan. 27, 1941, New Theatre. Vic-WB.
CAST. Robert Helpmann, Alan Carter, John Hart, Leslie Edwards, John Field, Margot Fonteyn, Mary Honer, Patricia Garnett, Julia Farron, Pamela May, Michael Somes, Joy Newton, Palma Nye, Wendy Horsburgh, Guinevere Parry, Joan Phillips, Elizabeth Kennedy, Margaret Dale, Deryk Mendel.

THE QUEST

Sc Doris Langley Moore *after* Edmund Spenser's "The Faerie Queene"; *mus* William Walton; *dec & cos* John Piper.
PREM. April 6, 1943, New Theatre. SadWB.
CAST. Archimago/Leslie Edwards; Female Servant/Celia Franca; Male Servant/Anthony Burke; Bats/Pauline Clayden, Lorna Mossford; St. George/Robert Helpmann; Una/Margot Fonteyn; Duessa/Beryl Grey; Sansfoy/Franklin White; Sansjoy/David Paltenghi; Sansloy/Alexis Rassine; Sloth/Nigel Desmond; Gluttony/Ray Powell; Wrath/Franca; Lechery/Burke; Avarice/Gordon Hamilton;

Envy/Palma Nye; Pride/Moira Shearer; Faith/Julia Farron; Charity/Jean Bedells; Hope/Moyra Fraser.

SYMPHONIC VARIATIONS

Mus César Franck; *dec & cos* Sophie Fedorovitch.
PREM. April 24, 1946, CovG. SadWB.
CAST. Margot Fonteyn, Pamela May, Moira Shearer, Michael Somes, Henry Danton, Brian Shaw.

LES SIRENES

Mus Lord Berners; *dec & cos* Cecil Beaton.
PREM. Nov. 12, 1946, CovG. SadWB.
CAST. Mermaids/Palma Nye, Gillian Lynne; Seagulls/Margaret Dale, Alexis Rassine; Children/Pauline Clayden, Alexander Grant, Guinevere Parry, Mavis Spence; Gendarmes/Paul Reymond, Alec Martin; Countess Kitty/Beryl Grey; Captain Bay Vavaseur/Michael Somes; La Bolero/Margot Fonteyn; Her Chauffeur/Leslie Edwards; King Hihat of Agpar/Frederick Ashton; Adelino Canberra (of the Adelaide Opera)/Robert Helpmann; with corps.

SCENES DE BALLET

Mus Igor Stravinsky; *dec & cos* André Beaurepaire.[14]
PREM. Feb. 11, 1948, CovG. SadWB.
CAST. Margot Fonteyn, Michael Somes, Donald Britton, Alexander Grant, John Field, Philip Chatfield; with corps.

VALSES NOBLES ET SENTIMENTALES[15]

Mus Maurice Ravel; *dec & cos* Sophie Fedorovitch.
PREM. Jan. 10, 1947, SWTh. SadWTB.
CAST. Donald Britton, Anne Heaton, Michael Boulton, Elaine Fifield, Maryon Lane, Jane Shore, Yvonne Barnes, Kenneth MacMillan, Michael Hogan, Peter Darrell.

DON JUAN

Mus Richard Strauss; *dec & cos* Edward Burra.
PREM. Nov. 25, 1948, CovG. SadWB.
CAST. Don Juan/Robert Helpmann; "La Morte Amoureuse"/Margot Fonteyn; Her Attendants/Alfred Rodrigues, Bryan Ashbridge; A Young Wife/Moira Shearer; Her Husband/Richard Ellis; Amours/Anne Heaton, Gerd Larsen, Julia Farron, Rosemary Lindsay, Nadia Nerina, Gillian Lynne; Rivals/John Field, Kenneth Melville, Philip Chatfield; with corps.

CINDERELLA

Mus Serge Prokofiev; *dec & cos* Jean-Denis Malcles.
PREM. Dec. 23, 1948, CovG. SadWB.
CAST. Cinderella/Moira Shearer; Sisters/Frederick Ashton, Robert Helpmann; Father/Franklin White; Godmother/Pamela May; Tailor/Donald Britton; Danc-

ing Master/Harold Turner; Fairy Spring/Nadia Nerina; Fairy Summer/Violetta Elvin; Fairy Autumn/Pauline Clayden; Fairy Winter/Beryl Grey; Prince/Michael Somes; Friends/Bryan Ashbridge, Philip Chatfield, Kenneth MacMillan, Kenneth Melville; Jester/Alexander Grant; with corps.

LE REVE DE LEONOR

Mus BENJAMIN BRITTEN, *orch* ARTHUR OLDHAM; *dec & cos* LÉONOR FINI.
PREM. April 26, 1949, Princes Theatre. Les Ballets de Paris.
CAST. Girl without Hair/Renée Jeanmaire; Girl with Hair/Joan Sheldon; Two Hirsute Men/Serge Perrault, Stanley Hall; Sphynx/Ursula Kubler; King of Nougat/John Gilpin; Four Whipped Creams/Sheldon, Belinda Wright, Mireille Lefebvre, Ruth Helfgot; Proserpine/Jeanmaire; Sombre Seducer/Milorad Miskovitch; Owl/Jeanmaire; Three Ephebes/Perrault, Gilpin, Hall; Two Bouquets/Sheldon, Wright.

ILLUMINATIONS

Sc based on poems of ARTHUR RIMBAUD; *mus* BENJAMIN BRITTEN; *dec & cos* CECIL BEATON.
PREM. March 2, 1950, New York City Center of Music and Drama. New York City Ballet.
CAST. Poet/Nicholas Magallanes; Sacred Love/Tanaquil LeClercq; Profane Love/Melissa Hayden; The Dandy/Robert Barnett; with corps.

DAPHNIS AND CHLOE

Mus MAURICE RAVEL; *dec & cos* JOHN CRAXTON.
PREM. April 5, 1951, CovG. SadWB.
CAST. Chloë/Margot Fonteyn; Daphnis/Michael Somes; Lykanion/Violetta Elvin; Dorkon/John Field; Bryaxis/Alexander Grant; Pan/Alfred Rodrigues; Nymphs of Pan/Rosemary Lindsay, Gillian Lynne, Julia Farron; with corps.

TIRESIAS

Mus CONSTANT LAMBERT; *dec & cos* ISABEL LAMBERT.
PREM. July 9, 1951, CovG. SadWB.
CAST. Tiresias (male)/Michael Somes; Neophyte/Margaret Dale; Snakes/Pauline Clayden, Brian Shaw; Tiresias (female)/Margot Fonteyn; Her Lover/John Field; Zeus/Alfred Rodrigues; Hera/Gerd Larsen.

CASSE NOISETTE

Mus PETER I. TCHAIKOVSKY; *dec & cos* CECIL BEATON; *chor* LEV IVANOV, *revised* FREDERICK ASHTON.
PREM. Sept. 11, 1951, SWTh. SadWTB.
CAST. Queen/Svetlana Beriosova; King/Robert Lunnon; Sugar Plum Fairy/Elaine Fifield; Nutcracker Prince/David Blair; Sugar Sticks/Patricia Miller, Carlu Carter, Stella Farrance, Annette Page, Veronica Vail; Chocolate from Spain/Sheilah O'Reilly, Margaret Sear, Pirmin Trecu; Coffee from Arabia/Stella Claire, Arnott Mader, Graham McCormack, Peter Wright; Tea from China/David Gill, Maurice Metliss; Nougat from Russia/Donald Britton, Stanley Holden, Donald McAlpine, Walter Trevor; with corps.

PICNIC AT TINTAGEL

Mus Sir Arnold Bax ("The Garden of Fand"); *dec & cos* Cecil Beaton.
PREM. Feb. 28, 1952, New York City Center of Music and Drama. New York City Ballet.
CAST. Husband (King Mark)/Francisco Moncion; Wife (Iseult)/Diana Adams; Her Maid (Brangaene)/Yvonne Mounsey; Her Lover (Tristram)/Jacques d'Amboise; His Rivals (the False Knights)/Stanley Zompakos, Brooks Jackson; Her Chauffeur and Footman (Heralds)/Alan Baker, John Mandia; Caretaker (Merlin)/Robert Barnett.

VISION OF MARGUERITE[16]

Mus Franz Liszt; *dec & cos* James Bailey.
PREM. April 3, 1952, Stoll Theatre. London's Festival Ballet.
CAST. Marguerite/Belinda Wright; Her Maid/Wendy West; Faust/John Gilpin; Mephisto/Oleg Briansky.

SYLVIA

Mus Leo Delibes; *dec & cos* Robin and Christopher Ironside.
PREM. Sept. 3, 1952, CovG. SadWB.
CAST. Sylvia/Margot Fonteyn; Aminta/Michael Somes; Orion/John Hart; Eros/Alexander Grant; Diana/Julia Farron; Goats/Pauline Clayden, Brian Shaw; Apollo/Kenneth Melville; Ceres/Anne Heaton; Jaseion/Philip Chatfield; Persephone/April Olrich; Pluto/Ray Powell; Slaves/Brian Shaw, Peter Clegg; Orion's Concubines/Dorothea Zaymes, Shirley Bateman; with corps.

HOMAGE TO THE QUEEN

Mus Malcolm Arnold; *dec & cos* Oliver Messel.
PREM. June 2, 1953, CovG. SadWB. Given on Coronation Night.
CAST. Queen of the Earth/Nadia Nerina; Her Consort/Alexis Rassine; Earth Pas de Six/Pauline Clayden, Margaret Dale, Anne Heaton, Michael Boulton, Peter Clegg, Ray Powell; Queen of the Water/Violetta Elvin; Her Consort/John Hart; Water Pas de Trois/Brian Shaw, Julia Farron, Rowena Jackson; Queen of Fire/Beryl Grey; Her Consort/John Field; Fire Pas de Quatre/Svetlana Beriosova, Rosemary Lindsay, Bryan Ashbridge, Philip Chatfield; Queen of Air/Margot Fonteyn; Her Consort/Michael Somes; with corps.

THE ENTRY OF MADAME BUTTERFLY

Mus Sir Arthur Sullivan, *arr* Robert Irving; *cos* Christian Dior.
PREM. Granada Festival, June 29, 1954.
CAST. Margot Fonteyn.

Nocturne in A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Mus Felix Mendelsohn Bartholdy; *dec & cos* Robin and Christopher Ironside.
PREM. Aug. 3, 1954, Empire Theatre, Edinburgh Festival.
CAST. Titania/Moira Shearer; Oberon/Robert Helpmann; with corps.

RINALDO AND ARMIDA

Mus Malcolm Arnold; *dec & cos* Peter Rice.
PREM. Jan. 6, 1955, CovG. SadWB.

CAST. Rinaldo/Michael Somes; Armida/Svetlana Beriosova; Sibilla/Julia Farron; Gandolfo/Ronald Hynd.

VARIATIONS ON A THEME OF PURCELL

Mus Benjamin Britten; *dec & cos* Peter Snow.
PREM. Jan. 6, 1955, CovG. SadWB.
CAST. Elaine Fifield, Nadia Nerina, Rowena Jackson, Alexander Grant; with corps.

MADAME CHRYSANTHEME

Mus Alan Rawsthorne; *dec & cos* Isabel Lambert.
PREM. April 1, 1955, CovG. SadWB.
CAST. Pierre/Alexander Grant; Yves/Desmond Doyle; Mme. Chrysanthème/Elaine Fifield; Mme. Renoncule, her mother/Elizabeth Kennedy; M. Très-Propre, her father/Franklin White; Mr. Kangarou/Ray Powell; Mlle. Wisteria/Anne Heaton; Mlle. Plui d'Avril/Pauline Clayden; A Dignitary/Leslie Edwards; with corps.

ROMEO AND JULIET

Mus Serge Prokofiev; *dec & cos* Peter Rice.
PREM. May 19, 1955, Royal Theatre, Copenhagen. Royal Danish Ballet.
CAST. Romeo/Henning Kronstam; Juliet/Mona Vangsaa; Mercutio/Frank Schaufuss; Tybalt/Neils Bjorn Larsen; Benvolio/Flemming Flindt; Paris/Kjeld Noack; Juliet's Nurse/Britta Cornelius-Knudsen; Her page, Peter/Bjorn Madsen; Friar Laurence/Jan Holm; Lady Capulet/Lillian Jensen; Lord Capulet/Svend Erik Jensen; Prince of Verona/Poul Vessel; Rosaline/Kirsten Ralov; with corps.

LA PERI[17]

Mus Paul Dukas; *dec* Ivon Hutchins;[18] *cos* André Levasseur.
PREM. Feb. 15, 1956, CovG. SadWB.
CAST. La Péri/Margot Fonteyn; Iskender/Michael Somes.

BIRTHDAY OFFERING

Mus Alexander Glazunov; *cos* André Levasseur.
PREM. May 5, 1956, CovG. SadWB. In honor of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the company.
CAST. Margot Fonteyn, Beryl Grey, Violetta Elvin, Nadia Nerina, Rowena Jackson, Svetlana Beriosova, Elaine Fifield, Michael Somes, Alexander Grant, Brian Shaw, Philip Chatfield, David Blair, Desmond Doyle, Bryan Ashbridge.

LA VALSE

Mus Maurice Ravel; *dec & cos* André Levasseur.
PREM. Feb. 1, 1958, Teatro alla Scala, Milan. La Scala ballet company.
CAST. Vera Colombo, Elettra Morini, Carmen Puthod, Mario Pistoni, Giulio Perugini, Walter Vendetti; with corps.

NPROD. March 10, 1959, CovG. RoyB. With décor and costumes by André Levasseur.
CAST. Deirdre Dixon, Jacqueline Daryl, Christine Beckley, Gary Burne, Richard Farley, Keith Rosson.

ONDINE

Sc Frederick Ashton, *after* Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué; *mus* Hans Werner Henze; *dec & cos* Lila de Nobili.
PREM. Oct. 27, 1958, CovG. RoyB.
CAST. Ondine/Margot Fonteyn; Palemon/Michael Somes; Berta/Julia Farron; Tirrenio/Alexander Grant; A Hermit/Leslie Edwards; Grand Pas Classique/Rosemary Lindsay, Annette Page, Ronald Hynd, Desmond Doyle; Divertissement/Maryon Lane, Brian Shaw, Doreen Wells, Merle Park, Peter Clegg, Pirmin Trecu; with corps.

REVE D'AMOUR—Pas de Deux from RAYMONDA

Mus Alexander Glazunov; *cos* Leslie Hurry.
PREM. Nov. 26, 1959, Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. At the Royal Academy of Dancing Gala.
CAST. Margot Fonteyn, Michael Somes.

LA FILLE MAL GARDEE

Sc Jean Dauberval; *mus* Ferdinand Hérold, *freely adapted & arr* John Lanchbery; *dec & cos* Osbert Lancaster.
PREM. Jan. 28, 1960, CovG. RoyB.
CAST. Widow Simone/Stanley Holden; Lise/Nadia Nerina; Colas/David Blair; Thomas/Leslie Edwards; Alain/Alexander Grant; A Village Notary/Franklin White; His Secretary/Maurice Metliss; Cockerel and Hens/Laurence Ruffell, Margaret Lyons, Robin Haig, Maureen Maitland, Gloria Bluemel; Friends of Lise/Christine Beckley, Shirley Grahame, Vyvyan Lorrayne, Georgina Parkinson, Debra Wayne, Audrey Henderson, Monica Mason, Doreen Eastlake; Boy with Flute/John Sale; with corps.

LES DEUX PIGEONS

Mus André Messager; *dec & cos* Jacques Dupont.
PREM. Feb. 14, 1961, CovG. RoyB.
CAST. The Young Girl/Lynn Seymour; The Young Man/Christopher Gable; The Gypsy Girl/Elizabeth Anderton; with corps.

CHOREOGRAPHY ADDED TO WORKS IN STANDARD REPERTORY

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

Mus Peter I. Tchaikovsky; *dec & cos* Oliver Messel.
Garland Dance in Act I: Feb. 20, 1946, CovG. SadWB. For new production.
CAST. Corps de ballet.
Florestan Pas de Trois in Act III: Feb. 20, 1946, as above.
CAST. Michael Somes, Moira Shearer, Gerd Larsen.

Aurora's variation in Act II: Jan. 9, 1952, CovG. SadWB.
CAST. Aurora/Beryl Grey.

Florimund's variation in Act III: Oct. 16, 1955, Metropolitan Opera House, New York. RoyB.
CAST. Florimund/Michael Somes.

SWAN LAKE

Mus Peter I. Tchaikovsky; *dec & cos* Leslie Hurry.
Pas de Six in Act I: Dec. 18, 1952, CovG. SadWB. For new production.
CAST. Svetlana Beriosova, Alexander Grant, Rosemary Lindsay, Mary Drage, Kenneth Melville, Philip Chatfield.
Neapolitan Dance in Act III: Dec. 18, 1952, as above.
CAST. Julia Farron, Alexander Grant.

GISELLE

Sc Theophile Gautier, *based on* Heinrich Heine; *mus* Adolphe Adam; *dec & cos* James Bailey; *chor* Jean Coralli, Jules Perrot, *revised* Nicolai Sergueeff.
Present production supervised and additional choreography by Frederick Ashton in collaboration with Tamara Karsavina: Sept. 30, 1960, Metropolitan Opera House, New York. RoyB.
CAST. Giselle/Margot Fonteyn; Count Albrecht/Michael Somes; Berthe/Gerd Larsen; Hilarion/Leslie Edwards; Duke of Courland/Derek Rencher; Princess/Julia Farron; Wilfred/Richard Farley; Pas de Deux/Maryon Lane, Brian Shaw; Myrtha/Anya Linden; Zulme/Georgina Parkinson; Moyna/Christine Beckley.

REVIEWS

FOLLOW THE SUN

Prod. C. B. Cochran.[19] *Dances and ensembles* Buddy Bradley, Frederick Ashton. Included ballet "The First Shoot." *Ballet* Osbert Sitwell; *mus* William Walton; *dec & cos* Cecil Beaton; *chor* Ashton.
PREM. Jan. 24, 1936,[20] Adelphi Theatre.
BALLET CAST. Landy Fontenoy (formerly Connie Winsome)/Claire Luce; Lord Charles Canterbury/Nick Long, Jr.

HOME AND BEAUTY

Prod C. B. Cochran (Coronation Review). *Devised and staged* John Murray Anderson; *mus* Nikolaus Brodsky, Henry Sullivan; *dec* Raoul Pene du Bois; *dances* Frederick Ashton.
PREM. Feb. 2, 1937, Adelphi Theatre.

OPERAS

Dances from THE FAIRY QUEEN

Mus Henry Purcell.
PREM. June 23, 1927, Rudolf Steiner Hall. Purcell Opera Society. Dance excerpts given: March 10, 1928, Century Theatre.
DANCE CAST. Diana Gould, Audrée Howard, Pearl Argyle, Prudence Hyman, Maude Lloyd.

FOUR SAINTS IN THREE ACTS

Libretto Gertrude Stein; *mus* Virgil Thomson; *dec & cos* Florine Stettheimer, Kate Drain Lawson.
PREM. Feb. 20, 1934, Forty-fourth Street Theatre, New York.
DANCE CAST. Caro Lynn Baker, Elizabeth Dickerson, Mable Hart, Floyd Miller, Maxwell Baird, Billie Smith.

Dances from THE FAIRY QUEEN

Mus Henry Purcell; *dec & cos* Michael Ayrton; *prod & chor* Frederick Ashton.
PREM. Dec. 12, 1946, CovG.
DANCE CAST. Spirits of the Air/Margot Fonteyn, Michael Somes; Nymph/Moira Shearer; Echo Dance/Beryl Grey, Gillian Lynne, Margaret Dale; Chinese Dance/ Alexis Rassine, John Hart, Pauline Clayden, Dale; with corps.

MANON

Mus Jules Massenet; *dec & cos* James Bailey; *prod* Frederick Ashton.
PREM. Jan. 30, 1947, CovG.

ALBERT HERRING

Mus Benjamin Britten; *dec & cos* John Piper; *prod* Frederick Ashton, Eric Crozier.
PREM. July 21, 1947, Glyndebourne. English Opera Group.

ORPHEUS

Mus Chrstoph W. Gluck; *dec & cos* Sophie Fedorovitch; *prod & chor* Frederick Ashton.
PREM. Feb. 3, 1953, CovG.
DANCE CAST. Svetlana Beriosova, Alexander Grant; with corps.

FILMS

DANCE PRETTY LADY

Directed Anthony Asquith; *chor* Frederick Ashton.
PREM. 1930.

THE TALES OF HOFFMANN

Mus Jacques Offenbach; *chor for "The Dragonfly Ballet"* Frederick Ashton.
LONDON PREM. April 18, 1951.
DANCE CAST. Moira Shearer, Edmond Audran; with corps.

THE STORY OF THREE LOVES

Mus Serge Rachmaninoff; *chor for episode titled "The Jealous Lover"* Frederick Ashton.
NEW YORK PREM. March 5, 1953.
DANCE CAST. Moira Shearer; with corps.

NOTES

1. In both this ballet and *Capriol Suite,* Andrée Howard danced under the name of Louise Barton.
2. Scenery was originally commissioned from Augustus John, but the painter's other commitments prevented him from carrying it out.
3. In 1938 Frank Staff also produced a version of *The Tartans* with entirely new choreography.
4. *Façade* has frequently been revived. However it may be useful to note here that for the 1940 revival the designer John Armstrong produced completely

new designs, which have continued to be used in all Royal Ballet productions. Since the first Camargo production three new dances have been added; the Country Dance in 1935, and the Fox Trot and Noche Espagnole (sometimes called the Nocturne Peruvienne) in 1940. Of these only the Fox Trot has found a permanent place in the ballet, although the Country Dance and Fox Trot were included when the work had its first performance at Covent Garden on August 1, 1949, with the Country Dance being dropped a few performances later. The Nocturne Peruvienne was included in the ballet for two special performances at Covent Garden on May 5 and May 7, 1956, and was also danced during the company's Australasian tour 1958/9. The Ballet Rambert production, which still uses the original Armstrong décor and costumes, has never included any of these three dances. In addition to the productions listed, Richard Ellis and Christine du Boulay have presented an authorized revival for their ballet school in Chicago, and for some years the Australian Borovansky company included an unauthorized version in their repertory.

5. The Carlton Theatre performance had Frederick Ashton as Edwin Morris.
6. The role of Venus was subsequently known as Terpsichore.
7. This was described on the original program as *"Rio Grande* by Constant Lambert . . . produced as a ballet called *A Day in a Southern Port."* For all this the ballet was still called *Rio Grande.*
8. This ballet was also occasionally called *La Valse chez Madame Récamier.*
9. This was a version of a ballet originally produced for the Ballet Club a few months earlier by Antony Tudor. The ballet was revised by Ashton later the same year, and subsequent productions were choreographed by Bentley Stone and Frank Staff.
10. When the ballet was revived on November 28, 1944 at the Princes Theatre, certain small changes were made to the décor and costumes.
11. These roles were subsequently called A Young Girl and A Flower Girl respectively.
12. This was a completely revised and greatly enlarged version of an Ashton ballet given at the Arts Theatre, Cambridge, on February 8, 1937. There it was described as "A New Ballet by André Derain to music by Couperin, arranged by Constant Lambert." The cast included: A Pedestrian/Lionel Dixon; A Knife Grinder/Ivor Harries; A Bread Man/Hedley Briggs; Three Gossips/Peggy van Praagh, Susan Reeves, Mary Skeaping; Harlequin/Stanley Judson; A Bourgeois Gentilhomme/Michael Martin-Harvey; A Marquise/Chrysagon Vaughan; Two Porters/George Welford, Donald Hewett.
13. Pamela May was announced for the role of Ceres, but a slip in the program stated that: "Miss Margot Fonteyn has offered to dance the rôle of Ceres for the performance tonight, owing to the sudden indisposition of Miss Pamela May."
14. For his décor Beaurepaire produced two sets, the first consisting of arches like an aqueduct, and the second representing a spiky Gothic pavilion. The original intention was for the arches to disappear during the apotheosis and for the pavilion to rise up at the back taking their place. This was found at the dress rehearsal not to work. At the ballet's first performance the pavilion was used by itself as a setting, but for the second and all subsequent performances the pavilion was discarded and the aqueduct setting took its place. Over the course of years there have also been a number of changes made to the original costumes.
15. This was a complete revision of the work originally produced for the Ballet Club under the title *Valentine's Eve.*

16. This was a complete revision of the work originally produced for the Ballet Club under the title *Mephisto Valse*. The part of Marguerite in Festival Ballet's version was created for Alicia Markova, but injury prevented her from ever appearing in it.
17. This was a complete revision of the work originally produced for the Ballet Club.
18. A new setting by André Levasseur replaced the original Hutchins on August 28, 1957, when certain changes were also introduced into the choreography.
19. Ashton first appeared in cabaret for Cochran in 1931, and his ballet *Récamier* was produced at the Trocadero Restaurant, which was under Cochran's personal supervision, in 1932.
20. This was a special performance, and the revue started its regular run on Feb. 4.

DANCE PERSPECTIVES